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Editor
THEODORE G. TAPPERT
7333 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia 19, Pennsylvania

Managing Editor
A. J. ENGELBRECHT
1250 Nowata St., Dubuque, Iowa

Book Editor
WARREN A. QUANBECK
2245 Luther Place, St. Paul 8, Minnesota

Circulation Manager
LOWELL J. SATRE
Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul 8, Minnesota

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I. *Aim:* The aim of this quarterly shall be to provide a forum (1) for the discussion of Christian faith and life on the basis of the Lutheran confession, (2) for the application of the principles of the Lutheran Church to the changing problems of religion and society, (3) for the fostering of world Lutheranism, and (4) for the promotion of understanding between Lutherans and other Christians.

II. *Policy:* The editors will welcome contributions that are likely to be helpful in the furtherance of the aims set forth above. It will be required of such contributions that they be frank and fair in their discussion of moot questions; that they be free from controversial animus; and that their contents be of real scholarly and practical value to the readers. Difference of opinion between contributors, or between a contributor and the editors, does not of itself exclude articles from publication since the editors do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions of contributors.

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CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL LEO, professor of the New Testament in Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, died suddenly several weeks after completing the manuscript which is here published.

JOHANNES KNUDSEN is dean of Graduate Studies in the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, Maywood, Ill.

JOHN REUMANN is assistant professor of the New Testament in the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa.

ERNEST B. KOENKER is assistant professor of History and Religion in Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.

WILLIAM D. STRENG is professor of Christian Education in Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

E. THEODORE BACHMANN is professor of Church History in Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.

ABDEL ROSS WENTZ is emeritus professor of Church History in the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.

Among the reviewers of books in this number are JAMES J. RAUN, professor of Systematic Theology in Northwestern Lutheran Seminary, Minneapolis; HAROLD H. DITMANSON, professor of Religion in St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.; ERIC H. WAHLSTROM, professor of the New Testament in Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill.; ROBERT P. ROTH, professor of the New Testament in the Lutheran Southern Seminary, Columbia, S. C.; E. CLIFFORD NELSON, professor of Church History in Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul; SIDNEY A. RAND, executive secretary of the Department of Education, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis; STANLEY L. OLSEN, professor of Philosophy in Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. D.; ALVIN C. RUETER, pastor of Bethany Church in Tulsa, Okla.; CHARLES B. FOELSCH, president of Pacific Lutheran Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.

Revelation and History in J. C. K. von Hofmann

By Paul Leo

In the present debate on hermeneutics, which to a large extent revolves around the views of Rudolf Bultmann, the question concerning the relation of revelation to history is central. In this connection the teachings of Johann Christian Konrad von Hofmann[1] are gaining new attention. It was the central purpose of this great thinker to clarify the significance of biblical history for the faith of the church and of the individual believer. He gave a classical formulation to a very distinct position with regard to the Bible, a position that today urgently calls for decision pro or con.

A study of Hofmann has to do not only with an historical issue. The problems raised and discussed by Hofmann are burning problems of our day. They are even intensely practical problems because they are closely related to the task of preaching and teaching the Word of God.

Hofmann's thinking is characterized by his independent position over against, and in the midst of, the theological trends of his time: a strong Lutheran orthodoxy, a growing historical criticism and liberalism, and a lively biblicism. He was deeply interested in the problems of history. The strongest influence he received during his studies in Berlin was from the great historian Leopold von Ranke.

The following study is based mainly on the following works: *Weissagung und Erfüllung* (Prophecy and Fulfillment), *Der Schriftbeweis* (The Method of Scriptural Proof), the commentary on the New Testament, and the *Biblische Hermeneutik.*

Weissagung und Erfüllung, his first major book, presented a quite new understanding of the relation of the Old to the New Testament. The historical approach to the Bible which is characteristic of this first book was more fully developed and applied to the whole system of Christian doctrine in his *Schriftbeweis.* Here, according to his basic principle, which will be discussed later, he first presented, in 56 pages, a very brief and concise summary of his dogmatic system

1 1810-77; head of the "Erlangen School of Theology."

and then, in the nearly 1,600 following pages, the scriptural proof for these theses. The doctrinal position was much criticized, especially by conservative Lutherans, and certainly it invites criticism for more than one reason. Hofmann's exegetical contribution seems to have much more abiding value than his systematic thought. In this study we shall therefore discuss his overall system only in so far as it is necessary in order to understand and evaluate his exegetical method. We shall even find that we do well to dissociate his exegetical method to some extent from his system in order to have the true benefit from his hermeneutical principles.

The commentary on the New Testament was written in order to clarify the nature of inspiration. It was in accordance with Hofmann's whole scientific approach that he saw the way to this goal not in a deductive procedure and not in a development of the nature of the Scriptures from general assumptions. To him the only justified way was a thorough exegetical examination of the whole material. This study, he hoped, would show how the Holy Spirit produced the document of revelation that we call the New Testament. The *Biblische Hermeneutik* contains Hofmann's academic lectures on this subject, edited after his death by his pupil W. Volck.

Besides his theological activity Hofmann was deeply interested and very active in the life of the church. In Rostock he participated in promoting the work of foreign and inner missions. He worked in close fellowship with Wichern, the founder of the Inner Mission in Germany. In Erlangen, too, he showed his interest in the work of missions and twice represented the theological faculty in the General Synod of the Lutheran Church of Bavaria. He wrote frequent articles for the *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche* not only on theological subjects but also on current questions of church life. Out of the conviction that a Christian must make the impact of his faith felt upon public life he accepted an election as representative to the Bavarian parliament, the *Landtag,* in which capacity he served for several years.

Personally Hofmann was a widely read and cultured man with a lively interest in classical literature. He was as well versed in Homer and Plato, in Shakespeare and Goethe. His home was a center of friendly and spirited hospitality, and his influence was felt far beyond the limits of the theological faculty. Several times he was elected rector of the university, a one-year term of office according to German usage.

Hofmann's approach to the Bible was definitely historical. We feel in his method something of the objective and matter-of-fact spirit of his teacher Ranke, who stated it as the task of the historian merely to find out how things really happened. To Hofmann the Bible was the record of the history of God's dealing with mankind which looked toward man's life in communion with God through Jesus Christ. This communion of the believer with God is the basic fact of Christianity. The Bible tells us the story of how this communion is established. The Bible, then, is not a collection of teachings but is a record of events. In so far as there is teaching in the Bible, it is always an interpretation of the deeds of God. God's revelation *is* history.

The actions of God through which the salvation of man was accomplished developed in stages. This gradual development and final completion of God's purpose of salvation is the content of the Bible. The Bible is the document of *Heilsgeschichte,* a term that has been translated into English in different ways: history of salvation, holy history, sacred history. This holy history is the center of all human history; it is woven into the history of man. The way for this concept of holy history had to some extent been prepared for by earlier theological developments. Hofmann stood in the tradition of men like Johann Albrecht Bengel, and to some extent of his contemporary Tobias Beck. Yet, as Hofmann stated it, his view was original with him and, I think, his most important contribution to theology. To develop its significance is the main purpose of the present study.[2] Hofmann presented biblical history as the discipline which shows the divine plan in Israelite history and its fulfillment in Christ.

The historical character of the Bible makes it necessary to read the books of the Bible in a truly historical spirit. Each story, each prophetical pronouncement, each poetical utterance must be seen in its historical context. The realization of salvation is always recorded from the viewpoint of a certain present, the present of the author of the particular book.

This means, for example, that the historical form of the Old Testament is definitely Israelitic. Thus Hofmann rejects the procedure of identifying Israel, Canaan, and Zion directly with the Christian church.

2 To the best of my knowledge the only modern book in English that was written in close contact with Hofmann's thought is Otto A. Piper's *God in History.*

What is said of Zion must primarily be understood as referring to Mount Zion, a particular place in Jerusalem, and only indirectly in the progress of the holy history did such a word gain significance for the church. "We dissociate ourselves from the futile endeavor of those who feel that they must rid the Scriptures of all Israelitic traits in order to use it as scriptural proof. To them the Israelitic element in Scripture is a concealment; to us it is a revelation of the essential relation of God to man. Precisely the fact that biblical history is Israelitic makes it Holy Scripture and God's Word to us, for Israel is the nation which was called into a holy history."[3]

The concept of *Heilsgeschichte* will become clearer to us if we see it in contrast with the views on the left and on the right. Hofmann clarified his view over against the traditional, conservative method as it was represented especially by Hengstenberg.[4] Hengstenberg's "Christology of the Old Testament" was the radically conservative counterpart to Hofmann's *Weissagung und Erfüllung*. Hofmann criticized the traditional view of the Bible because it placed every part of the Bible on the same level. It made no distinction between a pronouncement in the history of the patriarchs and a teaching in Isaiah. It found the same fullness of revelation in every part of the Bible and used individual quotations from Scripture as proof texts, regardless of their significance in the historical and literary context. But the Bible is made up of documents of history. "The traditional treatment transforms the *event* into a mere thought."[5] The Bible, however, is not *doctrine* but *life*.

This historical appreciation of the Bible led to Hofmann's thorough study of the historical and literary background of the Scriptures. He dealt very little with questions of higher criticism, it is true. In fact, he accepted the tradition of the authorship of every biblical book as correct. From the outset, moreover, he accepted the content as historical. "The exegete does not begin with a criticism of the elements [of Scripture], nor with a doubt as to whether they really are what they mean to the church, for the simple reason that they are elements of Holy Scripture. Relying on his Christian faith he approaches them with the confidence that in their unity they will prove to be what they are to his

3 *Der Schriftbeweis*, p. 27.
4 E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christologie des Alten Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1854-57).
5 *Schriftbeweis*, p. 29.

faith. This confidence as a general attitude of his mind precedes and accompanies his scientific handling of the Bible." "Doubt darkens, confidence sharpens the vision of the incomparable value of Scripture."[6]

Although Hofmann is little concerned about higher criticism, he is very much interested in an elucidation of the historical background of the different books and in a clear recognition of their individual character. "Inasmuch as Holy Scripture consists of writings which stem from an historical past, the exegete has to examine when, for whom, by whom they have been written and under what conditions and for what purpose."[7] "One has to read each writing with a questioning look at the time of its origin, and when this has been established one has to appreciate the whole and its parts as belonging to that time."[8] "We have seen that we have to consider the moment of life out of which a part of Scripture has grown."[9] This "moment of life" sounds like an anticipation of the *"Sitz im Leben"* that is so basic in modern Form Criticism. "One has always to read it as those read it to whom it first came or for whom it was originally intended."[10]

Though Hofmann was essentially conservative, his broad historical outlook made him open-minded with regard to some critical points of view. He was no arch-conservative. We shall see later in what respect he was a determined opponent of liberal exegesis, but he commended the critical school because it followed an historical line of thinking. Some points of criticism he took into consideration. Questions of authenticity were not *religious* problems for him. "Thus it cannot be our purpose to examine what is more or less a word of Jesus, or if the book of Ruth was written by a prophet, or the epistle to the Hebrews by an apostle, in order to determine on such grounds what power of proof they have. If Scripture as a whole is the Word of God, it has the same power of proof everywhere."[11] He admitted that alien elements may have crept into one or another book and that passages are embodied in the Bible which were written pseudonymously.[12] For example, Hofmann left it open whether the book of Jonah is history or

6 *Biblische Hermeneutik*, pp. 36, 37.
7 *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 118.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 125.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
10 *Ibid.*, p. 141.
11 *Schriftbeweis*, p. 25.
12 *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 123.

religious fiction.[13] Scripture, he said, "as ancient historiography in general, is more closely related to epical narration than today's historiography. Discourses especially are reported without the claim that they were spoken exactly in these words."[14] He regarded the discourses of Jesus in the Gospels, as well as the sermons in the Book of Acts, as free reproductions by the writers."[15] He was opposed to artificial harmonizing. "If the synoptics disagree, it is not our duty to weld them together. It is not the way in which Jesus spoke that is important, but the Word of Scripture is important, and each word has its own importance in the context in which it is found."[16]

To Hofmann the Scriptures were authoritative in matters that concern the Christian faith, but the Bible is not an inerrant manual on cosmology, anthropology, psychology, etc.[17] We should not do violence to the word of the Bible in order to harmonize Bible and science. Neither is the Bible an inerrant manual of secular history. There are differences in the reports which are caused by error, and Hofmann gave examples of mistakes and lapses of memory.[18] "Holy Scripture is something better than a book without mistakes."[19] Thus we see that Hofmann's stand over against historical criticism was by no means one-sided.

We have discussed Hofmann's first emphasis: his stress upon the historical character of the Bible, the *Sitz im Leben* of the different books, the variety of origin and purpose. But it is the main characteristic of his whole view that such variety is held together by an overarching and majestic unity. The unity consists in the fact that the whole of the Scripture moves toward the great and central event of the incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. The whole Old Testament converges toward this goal, while the New Testament starts from it and further develops it. This is Hofmann's way of conveying the truth that Luther expressed when he asserted that the Bible is the Word of God in so far as it treats Christ, *"Christum treibet."*

13 *Ibid.*, p. 132.
14 *Ibid.*, p. 226.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
16 Quoted in Christian Preus "J.K.C. v. Hofmann," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary.
17 *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 75.
18 *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 80.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

The tension, and at the same time the harmonious relation between variety and unity, in the Bible is the pivotal point in Hofmann's whole understanding. This appears from the fact that his book on hermeneutics is divided into two parts: the unity of Scripture and the variety in Scripture. This order of the two parts shows that the unity of the Scriptures is for Hofmann the more important. Only for methodical reasons have we reversed the order in our presentation. "The church appeals to a unit when it appeals to Scripture; thus we may expect that it possesses in Scripture a consistent presentation of the Christian faith."[20] Individual passages can be appreciated only in connection with the whole. This leads to a view of the unity of the Bible which is not logical but organic, like the unity and completeness of a tree. Accordingly, Christianity is not an acceptance of doctrines but a way of life.

I have reversed Hofmann's order of procedure because I want to make it quite clear that to Hofmann the unity of the Scriptures is not a matter of rational deduction. He did not arrive at it by a logical conclusion. For example, he did not say that the Bible must be a unit because this is what reason expects of a divinely inspired book. He did not argue as the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians did when they developed the qualities of the Scriptures. No, to him the unity of Scripture, though it is expected by faith, must be established by an intimate study and evaluation of the individual parts. Such an examination led Hofmann to the conclusion that holy history proceeds consistently toward a divinely intended goal. It is the ultimate purpose of biblical exegesis always to see the individual and casual in its relation to the unity of Scripture. Thus, as Hofmann's biographer says, it is characteristic of Hofmann's exegesis "that it subordinates all study of exegetical detail to the great plan of presenting a picture of the history of the Old Testament and of primitive Christianity which is as consistent as possible."[21]

The tracing of this unity of Holy Scriptures and the attempt to discover it behind its variety is the main purpose of Hofmann's three great works, in each one of them from a different point of view. Perhaps the most lasting influence on subsequent developments of biblical study was produced by his first work, which presented a new and

20 *Schriftbeweis,* p. 20.
21 Paul Wapler, *Johannes von Hofmann* (Leipzig, 1949), pp. 164, 165.

highly fruitful view of prophecy and fulfillment. We may well say that this new view is Hofmann's greatest theological contribution.

Here he proceeded as a reformer of the exegesis of his time. He totally rejected the approach of liberal criticism, according to which prophecy was practically abandoned because the possibility of a divinely given foresight of coming events was dismissed. He was just as critical of the traditional practice of interpreting prophecy as it was most consistently represented by Hengstenberg in his "Christology of the Old Testament." He called this method an "unprincipled rummaging in the Scriptures,"[22] for traditional exegetes took prophetical sayings out of context and applied them arbitrarily to one or another event of later years. This method assumed that prophecies were individual sayings dissociated from the historical background and the individual situation of the prophet. It made of prophecies incoherent glimpses of divine light that seem to have sprung out of the darkness. The Bible, he maintained, should not be used as an "armory of proof texts for a set of dogmatic doctrines" but as documents of holy history.[23] Over against the traditional view of prophecy Hofmann saw *the whole* history of the Old Covenant as a prophetic history that developed toward its climax and preliminary fulfillment in the incarnation of Christ. Thus it cannot be that certain passages of the Old Testament are meaningful to the exegete while others—sometimes whole books—are without significance for the prophetical content of the Bible. No, the *whole* of biblical history contains prophecy. Each event and each word in its place contribute to the gradual progress of divine revelation. This view, by the way, is suggested in the Epistle to the Hebrews more than in any other book of the Bible.

Hofmann called the incarnation of Christ the climax and preliminary fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. It is not the *ultimate* fulfillment of the plan of God. It is fulfillment but at the same time prophecy looking toward the final consummation in the return of Christ for judgment and the eternal establishment of the kingdom of God. And this was Hofmann's main contention: this prophetical development takes place predominantly in the *events,* the *deeds* of God. God speaks through his actions in holy history, and the words of the prophets or the prophetical writers are the interpretation or, as it were, the

22 *Ibid.,* p. 139.
23 *Ibid.,* p. 197.

divine commentary on the deeds. Therefore, Hofmann did not grow weary of repeating that revelation is not doctrine but life. In the concrete events of holy history God pursues his plans. His explanation of his deeds reaches us through the inspired words of prophets and apostles, through poets like the psalmists and through thinkers like the preacher in Ecclesiastes. This interpretation provided a completely new and wonderfully lively insight into the idea of prophecy.

Now we no longer see prophecy merely in isolated words like "Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata," or "They parted my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots."[24] For now the whole of the Old Testament becomes a record of God's prophetical deeds and of their explanation, and through Christ's incarnation the whole of the New Testament becomes a record of the fulfillment of the Old Covenant. And since this fulfillment is only preliminary, it points forward to the ultimate fulfillment in the eternal establishment of the kingdom of God. This amounts to a particularly Christian understanding of history. History finds manifold interpretations in secular philosophy. It is seen, in a pessimistic form, as a meaningless aggregation of facts. It is seen in the light of a biological development, one culture after the other growing and dying, as Oswald Spengler saw it. It is seen in the light of an evolution toward more and more perfect conditions in this world. But according to the Christian understanding of history, as it is clearly seen and developed by Hofmann, all history develops, not toward a shady, higher perfection in this world, but toward the accomplishment of the plans of God. All history points to the consummation of the kingdom, and in this sense holy history is the center and rallying point of all history.

Hofmann was anxious to fill out this grandiose picture with a painstaking assembly of all its details. I have said that his main exegetical principle was to see every story, every statement in its true historical context and to let no prophet and no apostle say more than was adequate in his time and in his personal situation. He realized that the presence of God expressed itself in prophecy in different ways according to the historical conditions.[25] "The *present* moment interprets itself in the word of prophecy; it says as much, and only as much, as it contains of future development."[26]

24 Ps. 22:18; John 19:24.
25 *Weissagung und Erfüllung*, p. 10.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Let us illustrate Hofmann's method with an example. Of Is. 7:14, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel," he said that we must not proceed at once to call this virgin Mary and her son Jesus. To be sure, Matt. 1:23 sees the prophetic word fulfilled in Mary's conception and the birth of Jesus, but the evangelist had a right to use the passage this way even if we interpret it as it first of all must be understood, namely, in its historical context. There is means that the salvation of the nation from its coming misery "will be just as wonderful as it is wonderful that a virgin conceives and bears a child."[27] This miracle, which is used symbolically by Isaiah, is seen by Matthew as a fulfilled reality in the birth of Christ.[28] We can no longer agree with this exegesis because we do not interpret *alma* as "virgin," but the treatment shows Hofmann's principle. Hofmann's treatment of the miraculous element in the Bible rests on the same principle of integrating the detail into the whole of Scripture. In sharp opposition to liberalism, he also regarded the miraculous as a necessary element in holy history. Scripture "cannot but share in the essential character of man's relation to God in Christ. This fact did not grow out of the created world, nor out of the spontaneous evolution of the human community. It was woven into these in *contrast* to them in order to transform and to assimilate them." Scriptures must be as wonderful and miraculous as holy history itself. Hofmann rejected the possibility of proving the truth and the significance of the miracle stories by an intellectual, apologetical procedure. Each story has to be seen in relation to its center, the establishment of communion with God through Christ. We must find the particular purpose of revelation which this story serves at the place where it stands in holy history. "The question is not whether one or another [biblical] event is possible, but in what relation it stands to Christ."[29] Hofmann said that some regard the miracles in the Bible as mythical because similar stories are found in heathen mythology, but here they are found in the context of holy history.[30]

The unity of Scripture finally presents the key to the problem of inspiration. A new foundation for the doctrine of inspiration was

27 *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 178.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 210
29 *Ibid.*, p. 39.
30 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

the ultimate purpose of all his investigations. He could not agree with the traditional conception of inspiration. To him it was too mechanical, merely a conclusion reached by intellectual deduction. According to Hofmann the exegete approaches the Bible with the assumption of faith that this book, as his church tells him, is the inspired Word of God. "It is not a matter of scientific demonstration, but a matter of faith, based upon the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that Scripture, in distinction from all other writings, has the quality of being 'God breathed' *(theopneustos)*."[31] But this fact must become apparent and must be traced step by step by discovering how beautifully and consistently God's history with man is presented in the Bible. This is not a deductive but an inductive procedure. The fact of inspiration is not an intellectual assumption, but it evolves from a thorough understanding of the Bible. At the end of his task the exegete holds in his hands the factual proof for the faith in inspiration with which he began his work. And divine inspiration guided not only the writers of the biblical books but also the collectors and definers of the canon. The history of the canon for this reason was of special interest to Hofmann.

Again, we see that Hofmann found inspiration primarily in the events of holy history. It is present only in a derived way, though with equal fullness, in the narrative and in the prophetic and apostolic interpretations. "Everything that can be referred to Christ is inspired, which means that it constitutes the facts of holy history."[32] The Holy Spirit activated the writers in the first place so that they could rightly interpret the events of history.

This, then, is Hofmann's theory of exegesis in a broad outline. It seems to me that the real and lasting value of Hofmann's contribution is found in these principles more than in the details of their application, especially as far as *Weissagung und Erfüllung* and *Der Schriftbeweis* are concerned. If we read these books we find that much of their exegetical detail has become antiquated through the progress of philological and historical knowledge. Moreover, he sometimes mars his exegetical argument by an inclination to be overly subtle and even sophistical. But the principles are as fruitful today as they were at Hofmann's time.

Now we have to see how this view of the Bible stands in the larger

31 Quoted in Preuss, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
32 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

context of Hofmann's whole theological system. We shall probably find that, convincing as his view of the Bible is, we cannot fully agree with its systematic background.

He takes his start in his system from the individual experience of the Christian believer, though he does not conceive of this individual in isolation but always in living relation to his church. The believer has Christian experience, the experience of fellowship with God through the saving work of Christ. It comes to him in various ways—through education, the preaching of the church, reading of the Bible—but it gains in him a life that is independent of these sources. This experience of the believer is to Hofmann the basic reality in the Christian religion. Alongside of it stand the witness of Scripture and the experience of the church. These three realities are the three expressions of the divine revelation, and in order to find Christian truth we must find these three in agreement. The search for this agreement is the task of the theologian who is responsible for the purity of doctrine in his church. Starting from his own Christian experience, the theologian deduces the facts of holy history that underlie this experience and then he examines the Scriptures to discover whether they agree with his deduction. This procedure rests upon the claim that we can deduce from our own experience the facts of the history of salvation. The experiences of our inner life make it necessary that holy history must have developed in this particular way. Thus we can reconstruct holy history from our own inner experience. But, as said, we have to check whether it really happened that way, and this we do by studying the Bible. Then there is the third reality alongside of inner experience and the Bible, namely, the experience of the church in its history, and this, too, must be searched for its testimony. Thus each field of testimony must conform with the two others, and by this agreement of three witnesses the truth of the Christian religion can be established.

Before we discuss Hofmann's lasting contributions to the science of biblical interpretation, let us first briefly consider the points where we do *not* agree with him. Every man is a product of his time and environment. Thus Hofmann participated in those attitudes of nineteenth century theology which have been left behind and are regarded as erroneous by the theology of our generation. Hofmann belonged to the era of Hegel and Schleiermacher, and with all his good intentions of dissociating theology from philosophy, he was not able to do so.

Later generations will find *us* in a similar predicament with regard to the spirit of our time. Hofmann's system is marked by two features which are characteristic of the philosophical thinking of his time: on the one hand, his starting point from the experience of the individual believer, and on the other hand, his attempt to develop the whole of Christian doctrine out of one basic and simple principle. Though he follows an inductive method in his exegesis, his general system results from deduction. This approach injects into his procedure an element of intellectual reasoning that brings him very close to the objects of his severe criticism, the dogmaticians of the seventeenth century.

The first objectionable point that I have mentioned becomes apparent in his partition of the theological task into three parallel witnesses to Christian doctrine. The first, and certainly to him the most important, is the believer's personal experience of regeneration. Thus the individual with his experience stands in the center of the theological procedure. The Scriptures represent only the historical origin of the Christian faith and therefore serve as the source by which Christian experience must be controlled and, if necessary, corrected. This certainly gives the Bible a secondary place, and as Karl Barth remarks,[33] it is surprising that the thinker who spent almost the whole of his scholarly endeavor on the interpretation of the Bible gives it this minor place in his theological system. We cannot but regard the Bible as the primary source of all theological thinking.

Of course, we must not overlook the great element of truth in this emphasis upon the individual. It is certainly of great value that Hofmann tied exegesis so closely to Christian experience. In his eyes the exegete is a truly *biblical* exegete only if he approaches Scripture in the attitude of a *believer* who hears in Scripture the response to his inner convictions. In this respect he was particularly opposed to the position of radical historical criticism which regarded it as the great discovery of modern times that we read the Bible exactly like any other product of world literature. In his time it was especially the attitude of the Tübingen School under the leadership of Ferdinand Christian Baur. Hofmann made it clear at the very beginning of his Biblical Hermeneutics that the difference between general and biblical interpretation lies at just this point: the biblical exegete approaches the Bible in the attitude of faith. Over against radical criticism Hofmann was anxious

33 Karl Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Zürich, 1952), pp. 557 ff.

to give to theology an independent existence. It should not be a handmaiden of philosophy, nor, on the other hand, should it be swallowed up by history, philosophy, and other secular disciplines.

From the old conservative school he was also distinguished in this respect. Hengstenberg also approached the Bible as a believer, but for him faith often appeared to be assent to a system of doctrines rather than a lively conviction of the heart that accepts God's acts of salvation, what Hofmann used to call the experience of regeneration.

According to Hofmann, this attitude of the individual is by no means merely subjective. The exegete is always at the same time a member of his church. His experiences are true Christian experiences only in so far as they coincide with the experiences and the witness of the church as a whole. Here we remember his view of the church as the third witness of revelation. The exegete does his work *as a member* of the church and *for* the church. In these tenets Hofmann revealed the confessional character of his theology, though he was often attacked by those who were regarded by some as the only champions of confessionalism.

It was Hofmann's conviction that what the exegete discusses and what the dogmatician teaches must be rooted in their spiritual life; we do not speculate about Christian truths so much as we think within them. In spite of the element of truth in this, Hofmann's systematic approach is unacceptable. The starting point of theological thinking is not the individual experience of regeneration, but the Word of God.

Another defect is connected with this one. After taking the believer's individual experience of regeneration as his starting point, Hofmann tried to deduce the whole content of holy history from this center. The fact that the individual experience of regeneration is what it is can only be explained if the facts of creation and redemption precede it. And the very existence of this experience leads necessarily to the eternal consummation forecast in Holy Writ. Kliefoth[34] makes it very clear that this procedure amounts to confounding historical and speculative methods of thinking. An historical development cannot be deduced from a central fact like the experience of regeneration. Historical facts come to us from outside. They are given to us in a way that we cannot figure out in advance. This is especially true of facts of divine revelation which in their very nature transcend the realm of

34 Theodor Kliefoth, *Der Schriftbeweis des Dr. J. Chr. K. von Hofmann* (Schwerin, 1859).

human reasoning. In both points Hofmann showed himself to be under the influence of speculative idealism, which started its thinking from the individual and wanted to develop its system as a consistent whole out of a primary given proposition.

Over against this procedure we hold that theology must take the revelation in the Bible as a starting point, not the individual believer. It must accept the facts of salvation in their *given* character without trying to press them into a logically consistent system. Least of all is this possible in the field of revelation, which often cannot be expressed in a logical way but only by way of paradox.

Thus we reject Hofmann's method of taking his start from the individual experience of the believer, a method akin to that of Schleiermacher. We hold that the starting point and the material source of theological thinking must be the Word of God. This is the most important objection we have to raise against the whole construction of Hofmann.

However, after we have eliminated this, a rich field remains in which we can harvest, for Hofmann made positive contributions to Bible study. We can make a clear distinction between Hofmann the systematician and Hofmann the exegete. As a systematician Hofmann was handicapped by the individualistic and speculative attitude of his generation, whereas Hofmann the exegete offers much for our instruction. Our preceding presentation of his views has shown where the great contribution of Hofmann is to be found: in his historical treatment of the Bible, a treatment which, however, acknowledges its divine character. To him the Bible ceases to be an arsenal of proof texts; it becomes a living organism. This gives new life to his view of the Bible as a whole. In a truly magnificent way he keeps his eye concentrated on the great unity of the history of salvation. His understanding of prophecy and fulfillment integrates every detail into the great stream of development. His bird's-eye view is not shallow and superficial; it is built on an intimate knowledge of every detail of the biblical text. I have already suggested that his exegesis in *Weissagung und Erfüllung* and in the *Schriftbeweis* is sometimes overly subtle. In some degree this is also true of his New Testament commentary, but much less so. There, with some exceptions, he is as exemplary in his detailed exegesis as he is in his view of the overall picture. The painstaking minuteness of his method becomes apparent

in his advice that a text which is to be explained should first be written down in the original tongue without punctuation and without spaces between words. That is the way the old manuscripts were written, and for an intelligent judgment concerning the meaning we must free ourselves from all dependence on the later editors who are responsible for the separation of words and for the punctuation.[35] We find the fruit of this method in his commentaries again and again, for he often tries to shed light in his commentaries on difficult passages by changing the traditional punctuation or even the separation of words.

This minute observation of details goes together with a continuous consideration of the whole. Each passage is seen in its context, in its relation to the whole book and to the whole Bible. What is new in his method is that his consideration of the context is not limited to a comparison of the doctrinal content of different passages. It is an old exegetical rule that each passage has to be seen in its relation to other passages and that difficult texts must be explained in their relation to clear texts. That is what we call *analogia fidei.* This method Hofmann complemented with another one which we might call *continuatio historica,* historical continuity: the consideration of the historical relation of different books with one another, the erection of a harmonious building of divine relation, or, if you please, the elucidation of an organism of the development of revelation.

The use of Hofmann's commentaries provides the reader with a strange type of enjoyment. On the one hand, you have to read patiently because the sharp intellect of the author sometimes leads you on involved bypaths of thinking. On the other hand, you feel at every step that you are under the guidance of a real master mind who is able to consider what is greatest and what is smallest at the same time and who integrates every detail into his great conception of holy history. He is the "scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven who brings out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52).

One thing—in fact, the central point of his teaching—needs further discussion. This is a point that, as far as I know, was not much discussed by Hofmann's contemporaries. But today we see it against the background of present discussions about the nature of history and its relation to the Bible. The point in question is Hofmann's conception of holy history.

35 *Biblische Hermeneutik,* pp. 107, 108.

As previously stated, we regard this as Hofmann's greatest contribution to the understanding of the Bible. It represented a tremendous advance over the traditional exegesis, which placed everything on the same plane and indiscriminately used proof texts from the Old or the New Testament, from historical or doctrinal books. This was justified in a time that did not possess the historical outlook of the modern era, but as soon as the idea of historical development entered the human mind the Bible could not but appear in a new and richer light. Hofmann did not fall into the error of the liberal school of historical criticism which overlooked the qualitative difference between holy history and secular history and looked upon the Bible merely as an historical source like other sources. He spoke of history in the Bible, but to him it was holy history. Hofmann himself at the end of his "Biblical Hermeneutics" suggested that this is the basic problem in understanding the Bible. In his eyes it was the basic insight of the exegete "that Christian salvation has had a preliminary history" and "that the biblical witness of salvation has been developed gradually in the process of the history of salvation."[36]

Today this conception of the history of salvation is again in the center of theological discussion in connection with the controversy with Rudolf Bultmann, which is perhaps the most important event in contemporaneous theology. In this connection Hofmann's teaching has gained new relevance. I think, however, that even those who see the great value of his views will admit that we cannot accept them lock, stock, and barrel.

The conception of holy history as Hofmann formulated it reflects the defect in his basic systematic position on the division of the object of theology into personal experience, the Bible, and the church. He regarded the personal spiritual life of the believer as something almost autonomous, something which has been created by the preaching of the church but which now exists independently of the Bible. The Bible serves as a norm which we use in order to correct our faith. To Hofmann the importance of the Bible lies in the fact that it gives the historical presuppositions for the existence of the church and for the spiritual existence of the individual believer.

We admit that this is one function of Scripture, but we ask if the *whole* significance of Scripture is expressed in these words. Hofmann's

36 *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 258.

view of Scripture smacks of the attitude of his great master in the field of history, Leopold von Ranke. Ranke tried to eliminate his own individuality as much as possible from the process of historical research; cool objectivity was his ideal. Hofmann for his part objectively compared his own religious experience with the facts of the history of salvation presented in the Bible, he was satisfied if they agreed with each other, and then he continued to be a Christian independent of the Bible. This view entirely overlooks the character of the Bible as Word of God. The Bible is not only an historical report; it also is a *living Word.* This Word not only reports; it addresses us directly. We are not only objective spectators; we are involved. It shows us our inner life. It opens our eyes to our sin and disobedience, to the fact that we are living our life apart from God. It brings us the personal, comforting message that Christ has come to me and to you to open for us the way to God and to heaven. This work of the Word of God in our hearts is not accomplished once for all. It is continuous. We need the address of God day by day for our admonition and comfort. This direct relation between the Word of God and the Christian is overlooked in Hofmann's theory. I say, in his *theory,* because I am quite convinced that here Hofmann's urge to speculate and to form a consistent system played him a trick, as it so often has done to theologians. When we know Hofmann the man and the Christian, when we read his deeply grounded exegesis of biblical books, we cannot doubt that in practice he lived on the Word of God day by day as everyone of us tries to do.

As I have indicated, Hofmann's conception of *Heilsgeschichte* has become an object of discussion in our day in connection with the controversy with Rudolf Bultmann. This is true even if Hofmann's name is not always mentioned. Bultmann rejects this conception of holy history because he starts from a quite different view of history. Friedrich Gogarten, one of the leading systematic theologians of our time, has developed this new conception of history (which to him is identical with the view of the Bible) in his little book *Entmythologisierung und Kirche.*[37] According to this view, the basic fact in the conception of history is that *I* am an historical being, that *I* live in the play and counterplay of historical forces, that *I* share responsibility in what goes on. There is no such thing as objective history on the one hand and a subjective onlooker on history on the other. My existence is historical,

37 In English translation, *Demythologizing and History* (New York: Scribner, 1955).

and in this existence I meet the address of God as it comes to me through his Word. This Word is found in the Bible, but according to Bultmann and Gogarten it cannot be separated from the story it tells. Event and Word are one, and therefore the biblical account would be just as true if historical criticism would prove that the stories of the Bible, their objective content, are *not* true. We see that in this view the objective facts of holy history are completely swallowed up in the present existence of the believer and his encounter with the divine Word. In this present encounter history happens; what happened 2,000 or 3,000 years ago is of no avail.

We feel, as we compare these two views, that Bultmann offers a very important corrective to the view of Hofmann but that he goes entirely too far to the opposite extreme. Hofmann needs to be told that his objective attitude toward the Bible will not do. It is an artificial construction worked out at the desk of a professor of theology. You simply cannot carry it over into a concrete Christian life, and this alone shows that it must be wrong. I think the basic error in Hofmann's system is the division of the object of theology into three fields. All three belong so closely together that they cannot be separated as in a chemical retort. We cannot think of the Christian believer otherwise than in his encounter with the Word of God.

The Bible in its character as a Word that we encounter day by day must be injected into Hofmann's conception. To this extent he needs a corrective from the side of the existential theology of Rudolf Bultmann.

On the other hand, against Bultmann we have to say that the basic conception of holy history cannot be dismissed. It is true that in Hofmann's thinking we find an element of that subtle over-estimation of human intellectual faculties that was characteristic of idealistic philosophy. Yet Bultmann's and Gogarten's one-sided concentration on the existence of the individual erases the riches of biblical revelation. The whole is reduced to *one* point, the impact of the divine encounter upon the present moment of the individual personality. If we discard the relation of the believing subject to the objective though supranatural reality of divine acts in holy history, with Christ in the center, then Christian faith loses ground beneath its feet. Bultmann, in fact, preserves an objective event *in the disciples' witness* that Christ rose,

but this event is so reduced, so watered down, that it cannot serve as a real foundation for our faith. Thus we hold definitely to Hofmann's conception of *Heilsgeschichte*.

Another modification of Hofmann's view must be added. We have already observed that his view of holy history works too much with rational concepts. He thinks that he can prove logically, from the experience of regeneration, that every step of holy history in the past *must* have happened as it did and that every event in the future *must* develop as it is forecast in the Bible. We could agree with this statement if it means to say that this necessity is based on the sovereign will of God. It must happen because God wills it so. But that is not Hofmann's point. He thinks that we have it in our intelligent power to prove rationally that it had to happen. Here again we find a sort of idealistic hybris. We can only humbly accept and try to understand the great counsels of God; we can never rationally prove and vindicate them.

This defect is connected with another one. In a somewhat naive way Hofmann understood holy history as just a part of history in general, even if the central and most lofty part. He acknowledged its peculiar position in the midst of secular history when he stated that in consequence of its unique character and purpose it had to be miraculous. Yet these miraculous elements are, through their embodiment in history, a part of general history. They are strange and striking, it is true, but not more so than a tropical flower would be in a northern forest. They are not qualitatively different. Here we have to introduce an insight which has come to our consciousness especially through Rudolf Otto and Karl Barth: the altogether alien nature of the divine in this world, the *unpredictable* character of revelation, which can never be fully integrated into the *human realm*. Revelation is *in* this world, but not *of* this world. Holy history is miraculous, but the miraculous cannot be proved like events that are fully of this world. For instance, the fact that Christ's grave was empty on Easter morning is not historical proof for the resurrection of Christ. This fact can be explained in other ways. Christ's resurrection is accepted by faith, not proved by reason. If Hofmann had sensed the unique character of revelation more deeply, he would not have tried to work out the progress of holy history as neatly and consistently as he did. Christian Preuss is right in his criticism that Hofmann sometimes tried to

prove too much. He occasionally impresses us, not as a reverent pupil of Scripture, but as its master.

If we stand over against the Scriptures in the attitude of reverence and awe which they deserve, we shall acknowledge that God's ways of revelation are not our ways. There may be what look to us like breaks and inconsistencies which bear witness to the higher logic of God. On the other hand, we shall see that the Word became flesh in the Bible in the same way as in the person of Christ, namely, with the weaknesses of human nature. We have to acknowledge what Paul Althaus calls the form of a servant in the Bible. In part Hofmann's attitude is due to the condition of exegetical science in his time. The deeper we penetrate into the historical origins of the Scriptures and into their way of telling the history of salvation, the more we see what, in principle, Hofmann has taught us to see: the historical individuality of each book and each writer. But we gradually see it so well that we notice more of the immense tensions involved in the unity of Scripture than Hofmann did. This growing historical insight led the scholars of the school of comparative religion to the point where they almost discarded the conception of unity in the Scriptures. It is our task to appreciate this unity anew, but at the same time to acknowledge the differences, individualities, breaks, and inconsistencies more fully than Hofmann did. Just for that reason we shall be more humble in our attitude toward Scripture. We shall acknowledge the fact that God's ways are not our ways, and that the mind of God infinitely surpasses our minds.

We are at the end of our evaluation of Hofmann's thoughts. Regardless of necessary criticism, they represent a lasting contribution to the study of the Bible, a contribution which is of special value in the present theological situation. The greatness of Hofmann's teaching lies in his insight into the theological unity of the Bible which appears in the form of historical variety. In our generation this double character of Scripture is more clearly seen. This, in fact, is the basic reason why in our days and among the leading theologians of our time we find a certain reconciliation between the critical and conservative schools. Criticism was always the champion of the historical variety in the Bible—to a point of a complete neglect of its unique and eternal character. Conservatism upheld the divine unity of the Scriptures, but felt that for this purpose the historical varieties had to be minimized. We

shall have to learn from Hofmann to see the divine unity in the human variety of the Bible, to see holy history in, with, and under the development of human events. We must learn from him to be open minded over against the findings of historical research, and at the same time to lend an attentive and reverent ear to the eternal message that sounds through the variety of different instruments as a harmonious symphony of divine revelation.

Revelation and Man According to N. F. S. Grundtvig

By Johannes Knudsen

THE direct historical impact of N. F. S. Grundtvig is confined to the small country of Denmark and is already removed from us by a century. Grundtvig (1783-1872) was born on the eve of the French Revolution and died after the Franco-Prussian War. He was rooted in eighteenth century Enlightenment; he grew up with Romanticism; and he was intensely interested in the liberal movements of the nineteenth century. The circumstances of his life are, with the exception of four journeys to England, encompassed in the narrow frame of his own country and its capital city. He was a clergyman who rebelled against the life and the rule of his own church but who remained within that life and revitalized and changed his own church. He was a patriot who fought for freedom and who contributed much to the culture of his people. He was an educator who laid a unique foundation for a remarkable form of popular education. He was a poet whose song has enriched his church as well as his people. He was an historian of stature who sought and found the well-springs of ancient life. His was a rich and strong personality, and he battled incessantly for that which he believed to be right, in the church as well as in the nation.

Grundtvig speaks to us from the past, from the same age as Schleiermacher, and he might well share the fate of his contemporaries as we turn away from the discredited answers of the nineteenth century and try to live in accordance with the demands of our age. A hundred years ago, however, he foresaw problems with which we are now faced and gave us answers that are important. These answers have been tested for a hundred years among his own people, but even that excellent laboratory does not offer us sufficient proof or disproof of the validity of his ideas. These must be evaluated and tried on their merit today.

One of the most acute problems in the middle of our own century is the use and understanding of the Scriptures. This problem has grown out of many demands of critical and historical research which cannot

and need not be recapitulated here. Suffice it to say that many scholars have contributed an enormous mass of information and insight by which they enable us to understand and use the Bible in a way that was not possible earlier. To some degree there is unanimity in interpretation, but there are many controversial opinions and many divergent views. On the whole, however, the attitude has prevailed that by continued research and discussion we shall be able to penetrate to the true meaning and therefore the true significance of the Scriptures.

As opposed in general to this point of view there are many Christians today who deny the validity and significance of this position and defiantly proclaim the literal and obvious meaning and use of the Scriptures. But even on the basis of agreement in the general approach to the Scriptures, there remain many differences. Of this our multitude of denominations is a sorry testimony. The same Bible is proclaimed and used, but the results are so divergent that the impact of Christianity suffers. Is there no common ground on which we can all meet?

Grundtvig dealt with the problem of biblical authority more than a century ago. It was not a problem of literalism versus critical research, for critical research had hardly begun at that time, but the contention arose that the true character of Christianity should be determined by scholars (that is, professors) who were in a position by dint of their learning to interpret the Bible. Their basis of interpretation was not critical and historical research but philosophical ideas, and the champions of this view were mostly men of rationalistic or idealistic schools who had largely discarded the traditional tenets of Christianity.

At this time Grundtvig was seeking a functional answer to the question of the effective vehicle of revelation. How, he asked, can God be operative in the world today? How can we know his way and his will? How can we be guided in a Christian way of life? How can we be motivated to Christian living and be certain of the promises of the faith? He was confronted by two answers in the theologies of his age.

One answer was that of doctrinal rigidity and biblical literalism. The Bible was accepted as the only norm and source of Christian faith and life, but the Bible was interpreted in the light of rigid doctrine. This answer could not satisfy Grundtvig. This does not mean, as has been supposed, that he pushed the Bible aside. To him it was still the

sacred and revealed Scripture of the church. He saw, however, that it could not function as the operative medium of God in the exclusive fashion which had been claimed. The reason was that even those who gave it absolute authority did not use it as if it had absolute authority. They subjected it to their interpretation and used it to substantiate their own claims about Christianity by applying it as they fancied. Interpretation will and must vary with varying ages, and when interpretation masters Scripture, which is claimed to be the only source and norm of life, then Christianity becomes servile to interpretation, whether it is locked in rigid dogmas or fluctuates according to the demands of current philosophies. The revelation of God must be above such changes, and it must bring the proclamation of God to man in an unvarying yet authoritative way.

The other answer gave Grundtvig equally great difficulties. It was the current and subjective view inspired by Romanticism. After Kant had locked the door of speculative access to God, the Romantic philosophers found a new door in the emotions. Imagination, intuition, insight—these admit us to a true understanding of God and the world. In accord with this thinking Schleiermacher defined religion in terms of feeling, in terms of dependence upon God. Thus Christianity became an individual matter, and the Bible was interpreted accordingly. This set the stage for nineteenth century and much of twentieth century theology. Man as an individual becomes the operating vehicle of God's revelation; subjectivity is truth. There is, of course, the essential truth in this approach that revelation must be functional and operative, but Grundtvig rejected the individualistically subjective approach. Christianity cannot possibly be as fluctuating as all this. Applications of Christianity must change, but the basic nature and content cannot change so.

An element was lacking in both approaches to the problem. This was history. Grundtvig was intensely absorbed in history for its own sake, but he had also, through the philosophical efforts preceding these crucial deliberations, become convinced of the supreme importance of history as the evidence of God's work in the world. When he therefore sought to define and describe the effective operation of God's revelation in Christ, he readily found the evidence in the historic church. This was the missing element in the biblicistic as well as in the Romanticist answers. God has not only revealed himself in the incarnate

Christ; he reveals himself today through the resurrected and living Christ, that is, through the historic church which is the body and people of Christ. Thus Grundtvig found his way to an emphasis on the church which became basic in his theology.

Immediately, however, the problem of identifying the church became pressing. For a while Grundtvig was tempted to identify the church with the historic expressions of it in organization, state church, ministry, etc. But he rejected complete identification because he became convinced of the need for freedom within the church, and particularly because he found the character of the church in community and confession. He emphasized the sacraments, but only because they were historic and corporate, not because they were administered by certain people or interpreted according to certain doctrines. In the community of the church (that is, in the historic fellowship of the faith) God operates. He is found operative in the sacraments, and man responds to him by a confession of faith. The sacramental giving of God and the confessional response of man are fused in the covenant relationship which is the basis for the Christianity of the individual.

The important thing is that for Grundtvig the church was the effective vehicle of revelation, that it was through the church that God was operative in the world through Christ. The church is not to be identified exclusively by any definite form, for within it freedom, under the guidance of the Spirit, must prevail. Important is the fact that for Grundtvig the church was corporate and historic. The emphasis on the historic was a heritage from the eighteenth century (Herder) and from Romanticism, but in the emphasis upon community he ran counter to prevailing trends. The nineteenth century was surging toward more and more extreme expressions of individualism, but Grundtvig pointed beyond this. He fought for freedom for the individual within society and for freedom within the church, but he constantly related the individual to the community. He thus opposed the formation of conventicles. The basic expression for community was the life of the people, not in a nationalistic sense but in a cultural and historic sense. Therefore the church, too, must find its form and its folkways as a guest within the folklife and language of the peoples of the world.

For a number of years Grundtvig wrestled with a double problem which sounds as if it was taken from the theological literature of our

own age. He formulated it in two questions, of which the first was, What is true Christianity? or, What is the historic content of the Christian faith? The other was, Is Christianity true? or, Can the Christian faith be the true faith for me? In a way we can say that it was in response to these two questions that he formulated his theology. The first question concerns the historical problem of the true, basic, and unchangeable character of the Christian faith, and it has caused a great deal of research and discussion in the years since he lived. He found the basic content of the church in its confession of Christ, and when we study the development of the ecumenical movement of our own day, we see how startlingly it is moving toward this same definition. The church is united in its confession; it is separated in its explanation. It is given character and strength by its confession; it is weakened in the divisiveness of interpretation.

The other half of the double problem sounds strangely existential. Can the Christian faith be the true faith for me? How can the historic message and life of God's revelation become that in which I live and move and have my being? This was Kierkegaard's problem. His tragedy was that he isolated this problem from the community of faith and that he only saw "orders" in the church. Grundtvig saw the existential character of the problem, that the Christian life must be vital and relevant, and he gave an answer. The vitality and relevance come through the fact that we have the living Christ in the community of Christians and that there is dynamic life in relationship to him as we find him in the life of the church, particularly in the sacraments. In both of the answers to the double problem the church forms an integral part. The church tells us what true Christianity is, and the church makes Christianity true for us today.

We might pose Grundtvig's problem in still another way. It was the problem of primacy. Does the Bible have primacy over the church, or does the church have primacy over the Bible? Grundtvig claimed that the Bible grew out of the church and that the church had primacy. This has laid him open to accusations of Romanism, and his view does, of course, share certain elements with the Catholic view. But he safeguarded himself against the accusation by strong disclaimers of the authority of office. Again his view seems strangely relevant today. We are, as mentioned above, torn between the extreme alternatives of literalism on the one hand and subjective, scientific exegesis on the

other. Grundtvig's solution is that the Bible contains the *kerygma* of the church and that it must be interpreted with this in view. We do not have in the New Testament a literalistic inspiration which defies all effort at historical study and interpretation, but neither do we have a text that is helpless in the face of philological, psychological, sociological, and religious studies. It is the *kerygma* of the church, and as such it must be understood and interpreted; as such it is safeguarded against individualistic subjectivism. It is time that we, in addition to studies in Judaism, Semitism, Hellenism, comparative religion, psychology, sociology, etc., include as a basic component in our New Testament interpretation the fact that the New Testament is the *kerygma* of the church. It is a living Word because the church is living.

The question of revelation, its effective and personal function in the world, is of course only one dimension of a problem. The other dimension follows in the projection of the question into human relations; or it is a facing in the opposite direction in the same quest. The problem of revelation and its function today becomes the problem of Christianity and culture. For Grundtvig the inevitable counterpart to the problem of revelation became the problem of anthropology, a determination of the basic character of man. He was personally never in doubt that man should be engaged in human affairs through an active participation, but he had to justify this participation.

Theoretically there was a conflict between Christianity and culture in the thinking of his time, for theoretically, from the point of view of official doctrine, man was alienated from God in the world and must be liberated in order to become a citizen of the kingdom. "The Lord bless thy going out and thy coming in" was a part of the baptismal ritual. Practically speaking, however, the opposite was the case. With the exception of weak remnants of eighteenth century Pietism and sporadic outbursts of conventicle revivalism whose sole concern was the kingdom of God, all Christians were involved in culture and society as a matter of course. The matter-of-course part is reflected in Kierkegaard's violent attack upon Bishop Mynster. The only trouble was that it was secular culture which set the tune. The church fell into step and marched along, all thoughts of "going out and coming in" blithely forgotten.

Grundtvig was, with the exception of a bitter period of frustration, not opposed to marching in the company. He was concerned about

who played the tune, however, and he became vitally concerned about the motivation for and the justification of the common march. For him the community of faith was not a thing wholly apart from the community of the world. It was apart in this respect that it related itself to God who had given new life through the forgiveness of sin in Christ Jesus, but it was not apart in this respect that it isolated itself from a world which was to be denounced or condemned. This must not be understood to mean that Grundtvig made the church responsible for society. The thought did not occur to him because he lived in a country where church and society were identical as far as all outer circumstances were concerned. Church people and citizens of the state were, except for a very few Jews and Catholics, the same people, so one could not speak of the churched as over against the unchurched. All citizens were, practically speaking, church people, and all church people were citizens.

The new thing about Grundtvig's anthropology is not that he took this identification of church people and citizens for granted. It lay in the fact that he was concerned about the gap between this identification and the doctrine of the church. When man is "saved" is he not supposed to be "saved" from the world? How can he be "saved" from it if he is uncritically a part of it? Because he did not wish to withdraw from participation, Grundtvig saw the problem of the relationship of Christianity to culture as a problem of the created and the redeemed man. He motivated participation in the affairs of society from a view of the created (that is, the natural) man. This differed from the traditional theology of his church. He refused to accept the doctrine of the total depravity of man, and while he was completely committed to the doctrine of man's captivity in sin to the extent that man cannot break this bondage and become righteous before God without the divine act in Christ, he did not believe that the Fall, through which man came into bondage, totally destroyed the natural goodness of man. Man is created in the image of God, and thus he has been given power to live and to create human values. This power does not enable man to reach God and is therefore not salvatory, but it does enable him to live a good and useful life. Furthermore, when man is reclaimed by God in Christ, this does not mean that he must break with and denounce his life as a human being in society. The redeemed man is the same man as the created man. He has been restored to life with God but he has not been removed from his former life. In fact,

the very event by which God became man shows a recognition of the created life of man. Christ became man not to condemn but to restore.

Grundtvig's emphasis on the goodness of created man was not unrelated to the philosophy of the time. Rousseau and other philosophers had proclaimed the natural goodness of man, and in many ways Grundtvig shared this idea. The radical difference lay in the fact that he recognized sin and death as a power to which man was in bondage and from which he could not extricate himself by his own strength. It was at the point of its underestimation of the power of evil that he condemned the religious philosophy of Idealism, particularly the philosophy of Schelling. So here we have a Christian thinker who agreed with the philosophers of his age in emphasizing the created goodness of man in defiance of the traditional theological view of the depravity of man, yet who upheld the Christian view of man's complete inability to extricate himself from the power of sin and death and who condemned the current philosophical emphasis on man's ability to overcome all difficulties. He saw the abyss between the realm of God and the realm of man when looking toward salvation from the point of view of man. Facing this abyss, man is totally helpless. But Grundtvig believed that the realm of God has invaded the realm of man so that we have been given the possibility of eternal life with God, and he believed that the realm in which God has placed us by our creation requires of us a responsible life, not in response to the world but in response to the Creator.

This view of man relates itself to Grundtvig's emphasis upon community of life and makes for a well-rounded, total view. But even this totality does not tell the whole story. There is another feature which is necessary to complete it but which has brought on a great deal of argument and controversy. It is perhaps the most radical aspect of his whole philosophy. Grundtvig reached the conclusion that the created life of man, far from being a foe of the redeemed life, was a necessary requirement for and even a prerequisite of the Christian life. Although he was committed to the view that only the redeemed man can live truly and fully as a human being, he also maintained that a man who lives truly and fully as a human being, created in the image of God, makes the only preparation for Christian life of which man is capable. Man has a God-given responsibility to live in the culture of the

world, not only because he is created in this world but also because by so living he prepares himself for the Christian life.

This emphasis does not grow out of a lessening of the significance of God's redemptive act; on the contrary, it grows out of a strong emphasis upon salvation in Christ. Man cannot save himself; he cannot lift himself to heaven by his bootstraps. Reconciliation comes only through God's act in Christ. Growth in sanctification is a fruit of the Spirit and can not be an achievement of man. The moment sanctification is held to be an achievement of man, it becomes tainted with self-righteousness. What man can do is to make the most out of his created possibilities, and he does this by responding to God's gift of life and to his revealed privileges and responsibilities. When he does this, when he lives truly and fully and responsibly as a human being, created by God, he fulfills his obligation to God and places himself in a situation where he becomes aware of his need for God's grace and is receptive to the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

The Grundtvigian expression of Christianity has often been called, though not by Grundtvig himself, a "happy" or "joyous" Christianity. If this epithet is to mean a superficial or hedonistic view which is blind to the power of sin and to the need of God's grace, then it is an utterly inadequate description. But if it means that man must respond to God with joy for the divine gift of life, with a great interest in all legitimate forms of human endeavor and expression, and with a keen sense of responsibility for the world about him, then it is acceptable. Grundtvig himself took an active part in the life of his people, and he inspired and motivated a folk education which has had great cultural and social results. He did not do this in the name of Christianity, for Christianity is a newness of life given by God, but he did act, and inspire to action, in response to God's gift of creation and inspired by the power of the Spirit. At the same time he called for and inspired to strong participation in the fellowship of the church. He insisted on freedom of conscience and worship within the church, but he fought against subjective interpretation. The church is the people of God which confesses faith in Christ as divine Lord and Saviour, and in the church God is redemptively active with his gift of eternal life.

The Relevant Gospel According to Rudolf Bultmann

By John Reumann

FEW words ring more frequently through theological discussions nowadays than the term "relevant," and few biblical scholars have done more than Rudolf Bultmann to make the Gospel to which the New Testament scriptures bear witness relevant to modern man.

It is now seventeen years since Bultmann put forward, in a programmatic essay of 1941, his tentative proposals concerning *Entmythologisierung,* the New Testament message made relevant for men today along existentialist lines, and over three decades since he began to advocate in earlier writings the positions now made so clear and controversial. It is therefore in order to attempt to understand his efforts, to assess and criticize this undertaking. While such examination might be made in terms of philosophy or systematic theology (for Bultmann's acumen and contributions in both these areas are great), it is from the standpoint of the New Testament that the most significant treatment can be applied, for Bultmann is primarily a biblical scholar, and his proposals deal first and foremost with the New Testament materials themselves. His Gospel-made-relevant-to-modern-man is here to be described and then assessed in terms especially of those New Testament scholars who have entered into the involved but fruitful discussions on how helpful these proposals really are in our hermeneutical predicament to make the Gospel which the New Testament records live for people of our day.

I

To do justice to Rudolf Bultmann and his program of *Entmythologisierung,* one must begin not with the sometimes terrifying results but with an examination of the background which leads him to this outcome. In addition to important philosophical, theological, and personal influences, at least three elements can be observed in Bultmann's career as professor of New Testament studies in Marburg

which help provide explanation for his proposals. First, he is an able lassicist who has made lasting contributions to biblical study apart rom any mention of *Entmythologisierung*—e.g., his early study on he diatribe,[1] the stream of more than twenty articles for the monunental Kittel *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*,[2] or iis popular paper-back treatment, *Primitive Christianity in its Conemporary Setting*.[3] His two-volume *Theology of the New Testament*[4] vill stand for a long time as an important reference work, particularly ecause of its solid treatment of so many key terms in Paul and John.

In the second place, Bultmann's work as a radical form critic tands behind all he has to say about *Entmythologisierung*. Following n the heels of source criticism, *Formgeschichte* sought to analyze the arious units of material which floated around orally in Christian ommunities, roughly between A.D. 30 and 50, and to classify these into trata characteristic of the Hellenistic church or the Palestinian community and, sometimes, *logia* authentically from Jesus himself. Bultmann was one of the more extreme practitioners of this form-history echnique, as his writings in the early 1920's show.[5]

The results of this discipline in arriving at any picture of Jesus an be seen most clearly in the book Bultmann published in 1926, *Jesus* (translated into English under the title of *Jesus and the Word*, or the ample reason that Bultmann says very little about Jesus but far more, comparatively, concerning the word or message which he spoke).[6] The methodology of Bultmann is instructive in showing why he can say so little about Jesus. The Fourth Gospel (on which Bultmann wrote a letailed commentary, incidentally, in 1941)[7] is ruled out completely as an accurate source for what occurred; mythological construction had conquered historical interpretation there. In the Synoptics everything betraying a Hellenistic origin to Bultmann—and this included,

1 *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen, 1910).

2 They include, since 1933, such important words as *ginōskō, alētheia, eleos, elpis, thanatos,* and *pistis*. Cf. the bibliography (to 1949) in *Festschrift Rudolf Bultmann* (Stuttgart, 1949).

3 New York: Meridian Books, 1956. Bultmann's classical interests have manifested themselves in a series of articles over the years along with his biblical ones; cf., e.g., "Polis und Hades in der Antigone des Sophokles," in *Theol. Aufs. für Karl Barth* (1935).

4 New York: Scribner's, 1951, 1955.

5 *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (1921). *Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien* (1925), Eng. tr. by F. C. Grant, *Form Criticism* (Chicago, 1935).

6 Berlin, 1926. Eng. tr. by Louise Pettibone Smith and Ermine Huntress, New York: Scribner's 1934.

7 In Meyer's *Kommentar*, 1941. Supplement, 1957.

for example, many of the Son of Man sayings or the teachings about sacraments—is set aside. Even in the Palestinian, Aramaic layer, anything which suggests "the specific interests of the church or . . . later development" must be rejected as secondary. And the residue, or oldest layer, marked off only with "relative success," still cannot be assumed to be the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus by any means.[8] Jesus did live, Bultmann insists, but little can be said of his life and certainly nothing about his Messianic consciousness. He was "the bearer of a message," which Bultmann traces out in terms of the coming of the kingdom of God, the will of God, and the concept of God as remote and near, and the bearer of this message died on the cross as a Messianic prophet. This Jesus is the outcome of Bultmann's radical scholarship and brazen skepticism as a form critic.

It remains to note briefly one other element in Bultmann's background as biblical scholar: his homiletical interest and churchly, almost pastoral, concern, which is quite apparent at times even in his writings of the most extremely critical and seemingly negative nature. This desire, to build up the church, is hinted at even as he seems to tear down the Scriptures which many church members hold so dear.

Consider these words on prayer, for example, in the book *Jesus and the Word,* as an illustration of this practical, almost pastoral, concern: "Prayer is not to be thought of as an achievement for the sake of which God must hear the suppliant." It is not a virtuous act at all, but "talking with God, and concerns God alone." It is based upon "no claim of the petitioner; it invokes the goodness of God, which can be trusted. . . . He who is willing to accept such goodness . . . and let it dominate his life . . . can trust it."[9]

Bultmann, curiously, refuses to discuss the prayer life of Jesus—not from mere paucity of records but for this reason: "How a man prayed concerns no other man, not even the historian. . . . Whoever so judges either sees in prayer merely a psychological phenomenon, . . . the object of interesting analysis, or he arrogates to himself God's own right."[10] This from him who is *l'enfant terrible,* in the eyes of many, in the playground of New Testament scholarship.

8 *Jesus and the Word,* pp. 12 ff. Cf. R. Fuller, *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus* (Studies in Biblical Theology, 12; Chicago, 1954), pp. 16 ff.

9 *Ibid.,* 182.

10 *Ibid.,* 188 f.

Or again, from the book on form criticism:

> Jesus . . . taught men that the present instant is the moment of decision, in which it is possible to yield up every claim of one's own and submit obediently to the will of God. This . . . leads man directly to the awareness of his own unworthiness . . . in the sight of God, and of his own situation as faced with inevitable decision; it is only here that he learns the profoundest meaning of God's forgiveness, which one can receive only as a little child.[11]

This reminds one more of the appeal of a radio evangelist in America than of the brazen German form critic.

Strikingly, in the preface to the English edition of *Jesus and the Word,* Bultmann's translators, and this was in 1934 in America, explain how this German scholar rejects all efforts to center Jesus' teachings about "the infinite worth of personality," the "cultivation of the inner life," or "the development of man toward an ideal," and how he talks instead of the kingdom as God's gift, not man's achievement; they add, it may be objected by some Americans that this is "a return to hopelessly outworn traditionalism," but this is a truth, they insist, our generation has missed and needs.[12] And something of the same thing has proven true of the essay on *Entmythologisierung* in 1941; here, too, Bultmann spoke, out of his scholarly and critical background but with a homiletical concern, a word that some men, at least, have needed and heeded.

The essay, running less than 35 pages, appeared under the title, "Neues Testament und Mythologie: Das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung," in *Offenbarungen und Heilsgeschehen,* published in Munich in 1941.[13] The key word *Entmythologisierung,* while often rendered as "demythologization," is best kept in the original since *de*mythologize suggests a negative connotation not intended in the German.[14] J. N. Sanders has suggested

11 *Form Criticism,* p. 74.

12 *Jesus and the Word,* p. vii.

13 Reprinted in Hans Werner Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos* (Hamburg, 1948), and translated by Reginald H. Fuller, *Kerygma and Myth* (London, 1953). All references will be cited from the English translation, unless otherwise noted.

14 While it is true that the prefix *ent-* in German often has such a negative connotation as *de-* does in English (*Ent*hauptung = *de*capitation), it is also true that it sometimes has a more positive idea, as in *Ent*wicklung (English, *de*velopment, evolution) or *Ent*hüllung (unveiling or revelation). Use of the term should not prejudice the case in advance; to "strip away" myth from the New Testament and do nothing more (as the liberals had done) is precisely what Bultmann does *not* propose.

"transevaluation" as an English equivalent,[15] and "existential interpretation" is often what Bultmann means. All these terms are helpful in following the close-packed arguments.

II

Bultmann begins his essay by pointing out that much of the New Testament is written in mythological language. Its view of the world, for example, its cosmology, is mythical with its picture of a three-story universe. Between the top story, Heaven, and the basement Underworld, man tries to carry on his natural everyday life on earth, but he is not left to do this alone, for God and Satan, angels and demons are always breaking in upon his world. God may intervene, for example, and there is a miracle; a demon may seize a man, and he becomes ill; life may be dominated by a divine spirit or a demonic spirit. This is the picture the New Testament portrays: man is not in control of his own life; in fact, this world, this age, this aeon, is in bondage to supernatural powers. More important, not only is the world thus portrayed; the event of redemption, the career of Jesus Christ, is also depicted in these terms.

This mythical view of the world, the whole setting for God's salvatory acts, Bultmann argues, is utterly obsolete for modern man. It is obsolete, for one thing, because of modern science. We simply do not believe in a three-story universe any more. Nor do we believe that the stars control our destinies, or that illness is caused by demon possession rather than natural causes and needs an exorcist and not a physician—Oral Roberts, to the contrary. This New Testament cosmology is also obsolete because of modern man's understanding of himself. Man today understands himself in terms totally different from those of the man of the first century, not as a battle-ground for angels and demons but as a unity, sufficient unto himself, proud of all his new knowledge, master of his own fate, and not ruled by outside powers and elements, like stars. Therefore, what the New Testament has to say about the Spirit at work in man, what the church proclaims about the sacraments or the atonement is "not only irrational but utterly meaningless" to him (p. 8).

Man today cannot believe the obsolete, mythical view of the world

15 *The Foundations of the Christian Faith* (New York, 1952), p. 7.

found in the New Testament. Yet the Gospel, the Christian *kerygma*, is cast in those first century mythological terms. Must preaching present this obsolete mythology along with its *kerygma?* Is this what it means to be a Christian today, that you somehow have to get yourself to believe in a three-story universe? Bultmann points out that this three-story universe is not even distinctively Christian; it is simply the "pre-scientific" view, common to most of the ancient world. Does the New Testament, he asks, embody a truth which is quite independent of this mythology, a *kerygma* that can be preached to modern man without dragging in the obsolete and drawing the battle-line at the wrong place? The task is to find if the *kerygma* can be stripped of its mythological encumbrances.

It is to Bultmann's credit that he goes about this task without trying to pick and choose what he wants to keep in the *kerygma*. He maintains that this is not a matter of selection or subtraction. Man must not simply eliminate whatever he does not like—e.g., the Virgin Birth, on the ground that only some of the gospels include it. Rather he must accept all the mythology and then proceed to interpret it, to demythologize.

Before going on, we must be clear what Bultmann means by "myth." He follows the "History of Religions" school and defines it thus: "Myth is that form of representation in which the other-worldly and divine appear as the worldly and human, in which the *Jenseitiges* appears as the *Diesseitiges.*"[16] Myth, therefore, does not mean an untrue story or a fairy tale but a way of speaking about the divine in human terms, of speaking about a transcendent power which controls the world and man, yet in terms man can understand. The importance lies not in the imagery but in the understanding of existence the myth im-

16 *Kerygma and Myth,* p. 10, note 2: "Mythology is the use of imagery to express the otherworldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side. For instance, divine transcendence is expressed as spatial distance." Cf. G. V. Jones, *Christology and Myth in the New Testament* (London, 1956), p. 26: Myth is "a quasi-historical representation of the ultra-historical, the translation of what is more than human into humanly intelligible terms . . . the divine call making itself intelligible not to rational thinking but through existential self-understanding." E. Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (London, 1955), pp. 16 f.: "Myth is the speech of religion. . . . It speaks of heavenly things in an earthly way, and of earthly things in a heavenly way. More precisely, myth speaks of other-worldly realities in this-worldly categories, of this-worldly realities in other-worldly categories. . . . Ancient religion makes use of the language of myth in order to assert a definite understanding of reality." Markus Barth, "Introduction to Demythologizing," *The Journal of Religion,* XXXVII (July, 1957), 148, adds, "Myth is . . . proof of the fact that man always was an existentialist."

plies: it is "an expression of man's awareness" (p. 11) of self, God, and world.

The New Testament demands demythologization, Bultmann says, because the New Testament itself often talks in mythical terms—e.g., it pictures the death of Christ in terms of a sacrifice or a cosmic event; this is using human terms to portray the other-worldly.

There have, of course, been earlier attempts at demythologization. Allegory, for instance, tries to spiritualize events so that they become symbols of events going on in the soul; liberalism tried to strip the myth away, only it used its critical tools to eliminate the mythology while Bultmann holds that we must not eliminate the myths but interpret them existentially. You do not eliminate the mythology, as liberalism did—that was its mistake and it ended up with no *kerygma*—but you interpret existentially, that is, as an understanding of reality and in line with an understanding of man's existing situation. Why existentialism as the thought-category in which to cast this demythologized *kerygma?* The reason is not because this happens to be the fad of the moment, or even because Bultmann believes that this is a thought-form in which the preacher can get through to modern man, but because Bultmann believes that existentialism is at many points quite close to what the New Testament says; it represents almost a secularized form of Christianity and is therefore an appropriate vehicle.

Bultmann begins the second part of his essay, on the how of *Entmythologisierung,* by trying to picture the Christian interpretation of being in existential language. Human existence apart from faith, he says, is weighted down with anxiety (I Cor. 7:32 ff.) or *Angst, Sorge, Furcht.* Man-outside-of-faith is seeking security in the things of this world, visible and transitory things which seduce man to surrender to the world. Such surrender Paul calls having confidence in the "flesh" (Phil. 3:3), the things of this world. Human existence apart from faith, with its emphasis on the things of the world, always leads to one of two things: a life of lust in which the flesh prevails, or a life of morality which makes a man proud of his own virtues. In either case man is leading a life of self-will, self-made security, based on the things of this world. Yet he does not realize that his very "security" is insecurity, as transitory as he is himself. Man apart from faith is always a slave of anxiety.

In contrast is the life of faith, which Bultmann also tries to por-

tray in existential terms. The life of faith, what the New Testament calls "life in the Spirit," means that man discards his self-made security, his dependence on the things of the flesh, and lives a life of faith in the grace of God, faith that "the unseen, intangible reality actually confronts us as love, opening up our future" (p. 19). This grace of God always means forgiveness of sins and freedom from hankering after the flesh, the transitory things of this life. It leads, therefore, to detachment from the world, not asceticism but dependence on God. This living in faith, by the Spirit, in dependence on God is truly eschatological existence, existence open to the future, an existence in which a "new creature" is born (II Cor. 5:17).

Bultmann uses the phrase "life of faith," but faith *in what?* To this he answers that New Testament faith is always faith in Christ or, as he prefers to say, in the event of Christ. "Faith in the sense of obedient self-commitment and inward detachment from the world is only possible when it is faith in Jesus Christ" (p. 22). Thus the important thing is the event of redemption in Jesus Christ. Does this need to be demythologized?

Before looking at Bultmann's answer to this question, it may be noted that thus far Bultmann has been using the language of the existentialists. This use of their language and thought forms, however, raises a problem for him: Was Christianity merely a prelude to existentialism? Could one express this picture of man, this understanding of being that we have just painted, without Christianity? To pose it another way, could there be Christianity without Christ, a Christian understanding of being without Christ? Do not some philosophies and psychologies come out at pretty much the same place, all without a devil or a Saviour?

Bultmann is at least honest enough to try to answer the question, and he admits that both Christianity and existentialism agree in many points, though he would say that they agree because primarily existentialism is really a "secularized philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life," a view developed from the New Testament, Luther, and Kierkegaard.[17] For example, both existentialism and the

17 *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 24; cf. p. 26. Bultmann's essay notes the philosophical problems here particularly with reference to the work of Dilthey, Karl Jaspers, and Wilhelm Kamlah. Among the points on which both existentialism and the New Testament agree in their understanding of man's existence are these: the permanent tension in man, existence as existence between past and future, the perpetual need for decision, continuing anxiety, and the inevitableness of death *(Sein zum Tode);* cf. G. V. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

New Testament agree in the formula, "Become what you already are!" "The New Testament and the philosophers agree that authentic life is possible only because in some sense it is already a present possession" (p. 28).

But here Bultmann parts company with the existentialists; while both use the same formula, they mean different things by it. The philosophers hold that you can become what you are by education; all man needs is "to be told about his authentic nature," then he will pull himself up by his own boot-strap. It amounts to saying, and the idea is as old as the Greeks, "You can because you ought." But when the New Testament says "Become what you are," it means something different, for the New Testament addresses these words to believers, not to natural man.[18] You do not become what you are by your own efforts but only *in Christ*. The New Testament sees that man has lost the actual possibility to become what he is—he tries to achieve self-commitment, even faith, by his own efforts instead of from God, through Christ. Precisely this is sin, to seek self-salvation instead of accepting it from God in Christ, and this brings us again to the act of God in Christ, the event which Bultmann says is decisive.

Dealing with Jesus Christ, Bultmann says, is not like dealing with some Greek myth or hero, for Jesus was an historical person; Jesus of Nazareth actually lived. The two chief and significant events connected with him are the cross and the resurrection. It is on these two that Bultmann focuses his attention in the question of demythologizing the event of Jesus. Does the cross, for example, have character as history or is it exclusively mythical?

Bultmann tries to deal with the question of whether we should demythologize the cross by stating that the cross has significance on three levels. (1) It was plainly *an historical event;* to use Bultmann's term, it is *historisch,* the crucifixion of Jesus has historicity. That is implied in the traditional use of the phrase, "crucified under Pontius Pilate." But the cross not only has meaning as a past, historical event;

18 *Kerygma and Myth,* p. 28: The New Testament "never speaks thus to natural man, for he does not possess life, and *his* plight is one of despair. . . . It sees that natural man, man apart from Christ, is not as he ought to be—he is not alive, but dead." His situation is, in one of the key existentialist terms, *Geworfenheit,* being tossed into Nothingness. "The point at issue," Bultmann maintains, "is how we understand the fall," i.e., not as mere past historical happening in 4004 B.C., say, but as indicative of my real plight and existential situation, with authentic manhood perverted and absolutely no ability to become before God what I will to be.

even more, (2) the cross has *decisive historic significance for us today.* Bultmann is emphatic in saying that we must go beyond that first meaning of the cross, as past historical event, and add that it is even more important as having decisive significance for us today. It is not only *historisch,* but also *geschichtlich,* or to use another term he employs, *eschatologisch,* having decisive significance for us today.[19] And beyond these two senses, there is certainly a third, (3) the cross has *mythical character* in that it includes *a religious message expressed in mythological language.* An example of the mythological sense of the cross would be the use of the various sacrificial or juridical analogies employed in Christian thinking and in the New Testament itself to explain the significance of what happened at Calvary—the term "Lamb of God," or the Anselmic theory of the atonement, or the language of Col. 2:13-15, where Paul says that at Calvary God was really nailing to the cross the bond that stood against us with its demands, and Jesus is depicted, as a result of the cross, as leading the tyrants Sin and Death in triumphal procession the way a Roman emperor might lead his captives.

Thus Bultmann answers that the cross is both history and myth, an historical event with personal and cosmic dimensions. It is another way of saying that what happened on "Calvary's mournful mountain" is not just an obscure event in Roman provincial administration, but it has the profoundest significance for us. To quote Bultmann: "Not an isolated incident which befell a mythical personage, but an event of 'cosmic' importance. . . . The cross is not just an event of the past which can be contemplated in detachment, but . . . it is an ever-present reality" (p. 36), an ever-present reality, for example, in the sacraments of the church (cf. Rom. 6:3, 6; I Cor. 11:26) and an ever-present reality in the lives of Christians (Gal. 6:14, Phil. 3:10). The cross is therefore both a permanent historical fact and a mythical event. But the problem now arises, How can the significance of the cross be shown? How can it be demonstrated that this event at Calvary

19 Translators have sometimes attempted to carry the distinction of the two German terms into English with the purely arbitrary use of "historical" for *historisch,* and of *"historic"* for *geschichtlich.* I have retained the German words as far more indicative of what Bultmann is driving at. R. H. Fuller notes, in his Translator's Preface to *Kerygma and Myth,* p. xii, that "by *historisch* Bultmann means that which can be established by the historian's criticism of the past; by *geschichtlich* he means that which, although occurring in past history, has a vital existential reference to our life today." *Eschatologisch* carries much the same sense; it denotes "eschatology being realized in the course of my life" and not any earth-shattering drama at the end of time.

has the cosmic significance that the New Testament claims for it? That leads Bultmann to discuss the other chief event in the life of Jesus, the resurrection.

The resurrection and the crucifixion belong together, Bultmann contends, as one "single, indivisible, cosmic event" (p. 38). This contention is correct, as Rom. 4:25 suggests, "He was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised up for our justification." But even though resurrection and crucifixion belong together, Bultmann maintains that the resurrection is not a proof of the meaning of the cross. The resurrection is not, he says, "a miraculous proof, . . . sufficient to convince the skeptic that the cross really has the cosmic and eschatological significance ascribed to it" (p. 39), even though the New Testament at times seems to do this—e.g., Acts 17:31, Paul at Mar's Hill, "God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead." This raising of Jesus from the dead can never be a final, positive proof that Jesus' life and death meant what we claim they do, he argues, because "an historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable" (p. 39). In other words, he holds that you could prove the historicity of the cross but not of the resurrection.

Now, the difficulty that Bultmann sees in proving the resurrection of Jesus as historical fact and thus proving the significance of the cross does not lie merely in the question of whether or not a corpse could be resuscitated; nor does the difficulty lie in the matter of witnesses who could come and swear they saw this. The real difficulty is theological: the resurrection, Bultmann maintains, is "an article of faith, and you cannot establish one article of faith by invoking another. You cannot prove the redemptive efficacy of the cross by invoking the resurrection" (p. 40). As he puts it a little later, "The resurrection is not a mythological event adduced in order to prove the saving efficacy of the cross, but an article of faith just as much as the meaning of the cross itself" (p. 41).[20]

Bultmann here seems to mean that the cross was an historical

20 Note that at Acts 17:31 Paul is proclaiming the judgment to come as an article of faith. He sees assurance for this in the resurrection of him who has been appointed to act for God in that judgment. But surely this, too, is an article of faith, and the two, rather than proving the judgment to come by the resurrection that faith sees has come, stand or fall together. *Both* are articles of faith.

event, and you might conceivably be able to prove the historicity of the happening beyond the doubts of any skeptic. You might find, for example, archeological evidence, parts of the cross, or contemporary documents from the Roman government files on the case, and prove that the crucifixion took place. But that would not prove the significance of the event; that would not prove that this was THE event in the redemption of the world, as the New Testament claims, an event so significant that time is divided into "before" and "after" by it. You could perhaps prove historicity, but not significance, that it was *historisch* but not that it was *geschichtlich* or *eschatalogisch* or mythological, as the New Testament claims. The significance of the cross was to be grasped only by faith.

In regard to the resurrection, Bultmann would deny that you could prove decisively and logically that this happened historically. You cannot prove the historicity of the resurrection. You cannot prove it but only apprehend it and declare it in faith. As a matter of fact, Bultmann maintains that the resurrection is not even subject to historical investigation; the only accessible historical *fact* is the faith of the first disciples in the resurrection, and you cannot deal with the resurrection as historical fact and prove it.[21] Even Schniewind, one of Bultmann's opponents, points out in regard to the story of the empty tomb that it is no miraculous proof of the resurrection. "It produces fear and alarm (Mark 16:9) and can be apprehended only by faith (John 20:8 f.); to unbelief it is a subject for ridicule (Matt. 28:13-15)."[22] The empty tomb proves nothing; it is part of the *kerygma* or proclamation of the early church, but you cannot prove the resurrection by it as historical fact.

Bultmann's point is that, while you might prove the historicity of

21 *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 42: "All that historical criticism can establish is the fact that the first disciples came to believe in the resurrection. The historian can perhaps to some extent account for that faith from the personal intimacy which the disciples had enjoyed with Jesus during his earthly life and so reduce the resurrection appearances to a series of subjective visions. But the historical problem is scarcely relevant to Christian belief in the resurrection. For the historical event of the rise of the Easter faith means for us what it meant for the first disciples—namely, the self-manifestation of the risen Lord, the act of God in which the redemptive event of the cross is completed.

"We cannot buttress our own faith in the resurrection by that of the first disciples and so eliminate the element of risk which faith in the resurrection always involves. For the first disciples' faith in the resurrection is itself part and parcel of the eschatological event which is the article of faith."

22 J. Schniewind, "A Reply to Bultmann," *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 73, note 1.

the crucifixion, there are two things you cannot prove but can only proclaim: the significance of the cross and the resurrection. Both are declarations of faith, and hence Bultmann's statement, "Faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross, faith in the cross as the cross of Christ" (p. 41).[23] What Bultmann is really doing—and here I think he is being true to the New Testament and his Lutheran heritage in his concept of the Gospel—is stressing the cruciality of the cross and the resurrection rather than any other details or incidents in the life of Christ. "Hence," he says, "you cannot first believe in Christ and then in the strength of that faith believe in the cross. To believe in Christ means to believe in the cross as the cross of Christ," a cross with saving efficacy (p. 41). To put it another way, the crux of the matter is the *crux,* the cross and its significance. Without that significance which the New Testament claims for it, "without that efficacy," Bultmann says, "it is the tragic end of a great man" (p. 41). And in putting it that way, certainly he is putting an end to any notion of a liberal Jesus, the good man or great teacher. You cannot just believe in some liberal "historical" Jesus, the kind the rationalists were in quest of, but Jesus is inseparably *related* to the claim that the New Testament makes for him, that he is Lord, and the crux of the whole issue is the cross and the resurrection.

One final question remains for Bultmann to consider, How do we come to believe in the saving efficacy of the cross? If the saving efficacy of the cross is the crucial thing, and to believe in the resurrection is the same thing as to believe in the cross of Christ, how do we come to believe in this? Bultmann's answer is preaching, the preaching of Christ crucified and risen.[24] As he puts it, "Christ meets us in the preaching as one crucified and risen. He meets us in the word of preaching and nowhere else" (p. 41). There alone we meet the risen Lord. "The word

23 Thus, to believe in the resurrection is also to believe that God has placed his "stamp of approval" on the work of Christ. The resurrection and the redemptive efficacy of the cross belong together, and both ideas, we may remind ourselves, were foolishness to the Greek mind. Passages in Acts seem to make this interpretation of the resurrection as "God's stamp of approval" on Jesus' career (3:15, 4:10, e.g.) but curiously do not seem to stress any direct redemptive efficacy for the cross; see, on this latter point, R. Newton Flew, *Jesus and his Church* (London, 1943), 122 f.

24 While Fuller consistently translates the term *Verkündigung* as "preaching" in the essay in *Kerygma and Myth,* the German word obviously implies more than mounting a pulpit to present a sermon. "Proclamation" might be a better term. Such proclamation comes in a sermon or, one might suppose, in "the daily conversation of believers," or in the sacraments, if the sacrament is a proclamation of Christ crucified and risen and is understood as such.

of preaching confronts us as the Word of God. It is not for us to question its credentials. It is we who are questioned, we who are asked whether we will believe the word or reject it. . . . The real Easter faith is faith in the word of preaching," the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18 f.: pp. 41 f.) which makes the saving efficacy of the cross intelligible. Therefore "the promise of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is eminently applicable to the preaching in which he is proclaimed" (p. 43): "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. . . . The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (5:24 f.). Likewise also Rom. 10:17, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."

What conclusion does Bultmann reach in his essay, in his quest to discover whether the event of Jesus Christ can be demythologized? He does leave a trace of myth, for he has refused to demythologize completely these two events: the significance of the cross, and the resurrection. You cannot prove them but only accept them in faith and preach them. Precisely here Bultmann draws the battle-line for Christianity; this is the offense, the *skandalon* that cannot be eliminated. As he himself says of the significance of the cross and the resurrection, they are not to "be removed by philosophical discussion but only by faith and obedience" (p. 44). These remain as myth, he admits, but not in the traditional sense of myth, for Christ is no phantom or figment of the imagination. "The eschatological emissary of God is a concrete figure of a particular, historical past; . . . the agent of God's presence and activity, the mediator of his reconciliation of the world unto himself, is a real figure of history" (pp. 43 f.). Thus we have the paradox of a transcendent God present and active in history, or as St. John once put it, so much more simply—and these are the words with which Bultmann ends—"The Word became flesh."

III

Since 1941 there has been ample reaction to and discussion of Bultmann's relevant Gospel among New Testament theologians, slowly at first and mostly in Germany because of the war-time conditions, but increasingly in the last decade and in the whole world of scholarship,

especially through the series of essays published under the title *Kerygma und Mythos.*[25]

Some of these biblical scholars voice the same criticism, for example, as their brethren in systematic theology. Is existentialism necessary, asks Austin Farrer, when it appeals to only one man, say, in 5,000?[26] Is it desirable, Ian Henderson questions, to try to do for our age, by re-evaluating the Gospel into existentialist terms, what Aquinas did by phrasing it in Aristotelian terms for his day?[27] Is there not the danger that the Word of God will be just as thoroughly obscured here as in the thirteenth century? And there is certainly difficulty in following a terminology which cannot even be put into decent English. One is reminded by all the distinctions between *historisch* and *geschichtlich* and between *existentiell* and *existential* of that passage in *Alice through the Looking Glass* where Humpty Dumpty says to Alice:

> "There's glory for you."
> "I don't know what you mean by glory," Alice said.
> "There's a nice knock-down argument for you."
> "But glory doesn't mean a nice knock-down argument," Alice objected.
> "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more or less."

That is the way Bultmann seems to use words.

The charge of irrelevancy appears in Grobel's observation that what *Entmythologisierung* amounts to is "the Gospel according to Bultmann for the intellectual German scoffer of today,"[28] a man with a Ph.D. or two in philosophy, two or three generations estranged from the church, and not completely satisfied with the psychological lift his analyst is able to provide. Some are tempted to stigmatize the whole

25 Four volumes have appeared to date, edited by Hans Werner Bartsch. Vol. 1 (1948) has discussion by Schniewind, Lohmeyer, Thielicke, Schumann, and, in the English tr., *Kerygma and Myth* (London, 1953), "An English Appreciation" by Austin Farrer. Vol. II (1952) includes articles by Barth, Bartsch, Buri, Oepke, Prenter, and Stauffer. Vol. III (1954), "Das Gespräch mit Philosophie," has contributions from Jaspers, Bultmann, Buri, and Bartsch. Vol. IV (1955) concentrates on "Die oekumenische Diskussion." Supplement: Der gegenwärtige Stand der Entmythologisierungsdebatte (1954). Cf. also Ian Henderson, *Myth in the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Theology, 7; London, 1952) and O. Cullmann, "Rudolf Bultmann's Concepts of Myth and the New Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (January, 1956), 13-24, in addition to the other items noted below.

26 *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 214.

27 *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

28 K. Grobel, "Bultmann's Problem of the New Testament Mythology," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. LXX, Part II (June, 1951), 99.

scheme as a disease of the Germanic mind, or even resort to the clever sort of couplet that runs,

> Hark the herald angels sing,
> "Bultmann is the latest thing."
> At least, they would if he had not
> Demythologized the lot.[29]

None of this—humor, theological dangers, or charges of irrelevance about the program—totally removes, let alone answers, the very real problem Rudolf Bultmann raises for hermeneutics and preaching in the light of current biblical scholarship and modern man's understanding of himself. Therefore it is necessary to consider more carefully the variety of criticisms which have been made against *Entmythologisierung* from a New Testament standpoint and to try to grasp some of the issues involved. Three are noted briefly and several others even more sketchily.

First, there is the oft-repeated charge that Bultmann removes all futurist eschatology from his understanding of what New Testament Christianity means. He, of course, does keep eschatology in the sense that the cross has genuine *eschatologische* meaning for me now; he makes decision and judgment and the New Age all very real to those who listen to his sermons. But his eschatology is entirely present or realized or, at best, in process of realization in my life; there is no concrete future hope, no prospect of cataclysmic end, no heaven or hell to keep this in tension. Accordingly it has been charged that while he does justice to D-Day, V-Day has totally dropped out of the picture. Eschatology has been made timeless, a matter of a man's own consciousness. The very stress on vital connection with our own lives undermines the possibility of future event for Bultmann. Eschatology becomes for him solely a life now that is based on intangible and invisible realities.

Bultmann takes the position that any notion of a "last day" is a mythological concept and that it is impossible to talk about a temporal end of time. He has the honesty to say that "mythical eschatology is untenable for the simple reason that the *parousia* of Christ never took place as the New Testament expected. History did not come to an end and . . . will continue to run its course."[30] His most significant discus-

29 *Time,* letter from J. Francis of Cambridge, England, Oct. 22, 1956.
30 *Kerygma and Myth,* p. 5.

sion on the whole topic appears in the Gifford Lectures for 1955 on "History and Eschatology," a treatment which shows an amazing knowledge of English writers on the subject of the meaning of history.[31]

Bultmann's reconstruction of eschatology in the New Testament preserves the Old Testament views with heavy apocalyptic influence. The first Christians are conscious that they are living in the last times, and for them "history is swallowed up in eschatology."[32] But this eschatological consciousness could not long remain when the Son of Man failed to put in his appearance, and so at least two lines of interpretation begin to appear. The first came in the historiography of Luke and Acts, in the development of a view of salvation-history carried on by the missionary activity of the people of God within the framework of secular history, what Erich Dinkler has called an *oikonomia* concept of history.[33] The second line involves a historicizing of eschatology, already in Paul and John, where the future fulfillment idea is given up, the emphasis falls increasingly on the fact that the New Age has already come in Christ, and eschatology is interpreted existentially. In Paul there is still something of the future hope of the *parousia,* but in John the eschatological event is viewed as happening entirely in the present. Here the believer has already passed through the judgment and entered into eternal life, and the few verses in John which do indicate an apocalyptic, future fulfillment (5:28 f., 6:51 b-58) Bultmann casts aside as the additions of an ecclesiastical redactor.[34] But this existentialist understanding of eschatology was soon lost in Christianity. The church, to overcome its disappointment that the *parousia* of Christ had failed to materialize, laid increasing emphasis on the sacraments, where attention was directed to the powers of the beyond already working for the salvation of the individual soul. In this way eschatology was neutralized. While there was lip service to the hope of a literal second coming in time, the existentialist understanding of what judgment and life mean

31 *The Presence of Eternity* (New York, 1958).

32 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 38 f. Cf. E. Dinkler, "Earliest Christianity," in R. C. Dentan, ed., *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (American Oriental Series, 38; New Haven, 1955).

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 47 ff. Note the succinct comparison (p. 49): "For both Paul and John the present time is a 'time between.' For Paul: between the resurrection of Christ and his expected parousia at the end of the world. For John: between the glorification of Jesus through his crucifixion (which is at the same time his exaltation) and the end of the earthly life of the individual believer." Soon, though, the question arose "whether this meaning of the 'time between' could be retained."

now in the life of the believer was lost. Thus Bultmann views eschatology, and thus the charge that he removes the notion of any future consummation.[35]

Secondly, it is said that Bultmann does not make enough of Jesus of Nazareth. *Jesus and the Word* says little of his message, far less of his life, and the essay of 1941 describes him only as "the agent of God's presence and activity" or "God's eschatological emissary"; Schniewind points out that such phrases could apply just as well to John the Baptist or any other prophet.[36] Even when Bultmann speaks of the cross of Jesus, it has been objected that he omits many of the significant corollaries which the New Testament unites with the cross: for instance, the dereliction of Jesus at that moment, his exaltation as crucified yet living lord, and his subsequent intercession for sinners on the basis of it, Schniewind suggests.[37]

This tendency to minimize the Jesus of history, it is further argued, and even to say so little about his cross leads to the result that the decisive event takes place in a man's own consciousness today rather than outside Jerusalem in the first century. Everything said about the cross is located, not at Calvary, but in our human experience. Christ becomes a subjective Christ rather than an objective Jesus. In biblical terms the *ephapax* of the event,[38] the once-and-for-all-ness or *Einmaligkeit*, is lost for a series of decisive moments of subjective confrontation. He loses, Schniewind says, that "supreme importance" the New Testament "always attaches . . . to the uniqueness and finality of Jesus."[39] There is even the charge here that Bultmann is a neo-gnostic. It was the gnostics in Corinth who wanted to say "*Jesus* is anathema" (I Cor. 12:3) and would speak only of a cosmic *Christ*, not intimately connected with the scandal of a Jewish man in all the relativities of his-

35 In general, it may be noted that Bultmann makes more of Graeco-Roman, gnostic backgrounds for New Testament theology than of Jewish apocalyptic, especially in comparison with E. Stauffer. Contrast, e.g., Stauffer's stress on Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic against Bultmann's use of gnostic motifs to explain ideas in the primitive church. Both seem to overemphasize, but perhaps the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls makes Bultmann's approach less secure. His tendency to undervalue the Old Testament, apocalyptic background appears here, I believe, in the treatment of eschatology.

36 *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 84.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 60 ff.

38 Rom. 6:10, Heb. 7:27, 9:12, 10:10.

39 *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 67.

tory.[40] In that Bultmann is unwilling to say more about the Jesus of history, he is thus adjudged guilty of settling for a gnostic, cosmic Christ who "finds men" in their current anxiety but who has little vital connection with the Jesus whom Peter and the other disciples knew.

Bultmann retorts that he roots his Christ as much in the historical Jesus as his critical investigation will allow. But as a form critic, he is convinced that it is possible to say very little about his life and certainly impossible to write a biography. It cannot be emphasized too strongly, though, that for Bultmann there is a hard core of historical fact; the saving event, he says, is an event in space and time. Donald Baillie can write, "Bultmann has made it quite clear that the incursion of God into history in a particular man, Jesus Christ, is determinative for his theology."[41] While many New Testament scholars prefer to try to say more about the historical Jesus and are impressed by the new possibilities for re-evaluating the worth of the Fourth Gospel as a source and the authenticity of more synoptic material than Bultmann allows, his failing here must be attributed to his radical critical scholarship and not glibly to any gnosticizing in personal theology.

It is to be noted that in the fall of 1957 one of Bultmann's ablest followers, Günther Bornkamm of Heidelberg, published a life of Jesus from the Bultmannian viewpoint.[42] There is a fresh accent on the historical Jesus, not only as evidenced in this book but also in the work of such younger scholars as Käsemann and Fuchs as well.[43] While it is no return to the rationalistic nineteenth century lives of Christ and does not always say too much more than Bultmann's *Jesus and the Word,* there are exegetical shifts that see more significance in the historical Jesus, especially for this reason: "Telling of the heavenly Lord in terms of the earthly Jesus is necessary as a repudiation of myth, for one thereby limits myth to the function of showing the universal significance of the unique historical event."[44] There appears to be more

40 Paul did not merely discover a Messiah, but the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Hence the creedal formulas, "*Jesus* is Lord," "*Jesus* is the Christ." It was precisely the gnostic heresy that wanted to break loose from God's decisive revelation in history to a more speculative type of religion not moored in history.

41 *God Was in Christ* (New York, 1948), p. 213.

42 *Jesus von Nazareth* (Stuttgart, 1957).

43 Cf. the remarks by J. M. Robinson in his review of Bornkamm's book in *Journal of Biblical Literatur,* Vol. LXXVI, Part IV (Dec., 1957), 310-313.

44 *Ibid.,* p. 311, quoting Käsemann.

interest in the historical Jesus among Bultmannians than might otherwise be supposed.

A third area of criticism against Bultmann is that he removes myth, which is really necessary, after all, even for modern man and for any real understanding of self, world, or God. Schniewind, for instance, feels that it is doubtful whether the human mind can ever dispense with myth; every attempt to do without it results either in nihilism or leaves the question whether the invisible has in fact become visible. Any confession about God, he goes on, involves the language of myth, and so does the description of any act of God.[45] Lohmeyer reminds us that Protestant theology "knows that myth is the mode in which God has chosen to reveal himself."[46] F. K. Schumann, of Münster, argues that the New Testament itself knew that the imagery of its myth had to be taken not literally but symbolically, and that this biblical myth must not be eliminated but interpreted, so that while there can be an interpreted Gospel there can never be one free from all mythology —which, in a real sense, is what Bultmann seems to be proposing: to interpret the biblical myth existentially.[47] In America, Amos Wilder, with a particular feeling for the poetic and literary side of biblical criticism, has argued strenuously in favor of the utter necessity of keeping myth in religion today.[48]

It may be added, though, that while insisting upon existential interpretation of the Bible's myth Bultmann also retains this mythical element, not only as the basis for his interpreting but also at times in its own right. Several times Bultmann comments, for example, that the language of mythology has a place in liturgy, and to this he does not object,[49] though he pleads that it needs interpretation to make sense to modern man, and that is what he is trying to do. To quote Bultmann again, "If the traditional imagery is preserved—e.g., in liturgy, where its use is perfectly legitimate—we should see that its real meaning is given adequate interpretation."[50] Perhaps involved here for us is the question of the language of liturgy and the language of proclamation; can myth have a place in the one with all its time-honored terms, while

45 *Kerygma and Myth,* pp. 48 ff.
46 *Kerygma und Mythos* (German) I, 165; cf. Eng. tr., 125 ff.
47 *Kerygma and Myth,* 175 ff.
48 *New Testament Faith for Today* (New York, 1955), 40 ff.
49 *Kerygma and Myth,* p. 110.
50 *Ibid.,* p. 122.

the witness of the other must not be in any terms other than those which confront man in his existence with the Word of God?[51] One cannot, however, simply say, "Bultmann dismisses all myth and man needs some myth today." The real issue he raises is how shall we, surrounded by myth as we are, make our traditional and biblical symbols speak unambiguously to men and not use myth or liturgy as an excuse for vagueness or obscurantism of the true *skandalon.*

There are a number of other problems raised about the program of *Entmythologisierung* from the New Testament frame of reference to note in passing. There is the charge that Bultmann makes the saving event not the resurrection of Jesus Christ but faith in the resurrection; not Christ as a real person but the proclamation about Christ—which may be another way of saying that his historical skepticism keeps us from any strong emphasis on the man Jesus or the events in his life to which the New Testament witnesses.

Bultmann is lacking in community emphasis. All is wrapped up in the individual and his strictly inward, lonely encounter with God.

He does not do justice to the cosmic side of New Testament Christology. G. V. Jones particularly scores him on this point. In the language of traditional theology, Bultmann is strong on the *Christus pro me,* but weak on the *Christus extra me* and *supra me.*

He neglects the Old Testament, that very earthy and historical book, and "spiritualizes" the law, Gustav Wingren feels.[52]

And has he come to terms with the insights of modern psychology? He is excellent in summarizing the Greek and biblical views of man, but if, in order to avoid nature as a realm that is now handed over to the physical sciences, we are to set up shop in the realm of personal experience and make our pitch to men on the basis of their understanding of the self and their own feelings and experiences, then we must be sure that our view of "person" is not untenable in the light of what the science of the person and his make-up currently has to say—else we may find that the view of man we present as Christian is made as obsolete by the "assured results of scientific investigation" as

51 In practical terms, is the reading of the scripture lessons during a service an act of worship, with a certain mood of mysticism and elevation (thus calling for the King James Version), or is it proclamation, where utmost clarity consonant with dignity is called for (as in the RSV)?

52 G. Wingren, *Theology in Conflict* (Philadelphia, 1958), especially 139 ff.

the chronology of Ussher based on the biblical figures was outmoded by archeological discovery.

It was suggested at the outset that Bultmann's premises and procedures must be scrutinized and examined, not just his results, which are halting and tentative. If, however, one wants fairly to examine his results, the proof of the pudding lies in his preaching; some of his sermons preached at Marburg during the Nazi period, when Bultmann continued active in church life, and since then may prove illuminating.[53] Above all, we must in no sense regard his essay and subsequent remarks as definitive. He is simply pointing the way to a task that will require a generation or more and the efforts of many thinking men. While Bultmann may not be giving all the right answers, he is certainly asking significant questions. He has laid upon our consciences the fact that, in his words, "the restatement of mythology is a burning issue for our domestic discussions"[54] in order to make the Gospel relevant to men.

53 See his *Marburger Predigten* (Tübingen, 1956). For brief examples in English, see K. Grobel, in *Journal of Biblical Literature,* Vol. LXX, Part II (June, 1957), 88 ff. or M. Heinecken, "Bultmann and Preaching" in *The Lutheran Quarterly,* Vol. VI, No. 4 (Nov., 1954), 283-298.

54 *Kerygma and Myth,* p. 123.

The New Role of the Scriptures in Roman Catholicism

By Ernest B. Koenker

IT IS reported that after the first reading of the Augsburg Confession in 1530 Dr. Eck reassured the Roman Catholic Duke William of Bavaria by offering to refute the new Confession on the basis of the Church Fathers, but not from Sacred Scriptures. To this the Duke is said to have replied, "So I understand that the Lutherans are sitting in the Scriptures and we outside."[1]

Quite apart from such questions as the reliability of this report or its validity with regard to the Roman Catholic Church of that day, there are not a few people who would apply it unequivocally to our situation today. However, one development, along with a host of others, should guard one from making such a hasty generalization: it is the quite remarkable revival in circulation, study, and popular reading of the Bible in the Roman Catholic Church during the past half-century. Too little effort has been made to understand Roman Catholicism as a living, organic development in the present day, and Lutherans are particularly susceptible to the error of judging Roman Catholicism strictly in terms of sixteenth century polemics. The revival in Roman Catholic life on the continent of Europe, seen in such areas as attendance at services, influence in literature and art, the new role of the laity, and basic restudy of theological issues, seems to have escaped all but continental Lutherans who, quite nonplused, find Roman Catholics engaged in tasks which they had taken to be their own proprietary domain. It is necessary that in each of these areas from time to time we re-examine the historical development and re-evaluate the current historical, theological, and pastoral situation. We are not saying that Roman Catholics are now suddenly reading their Bibles on a vast scale; certainly it remains a remote and unfamiliar book to a large proportion of them. However, as Lutherans it is with particular affection that we note the increased availability and the extensive research being conducted in this area within the Roman Catholic Church.

It may be well quickly to explore the situation which prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church prior to the developments of, roughly, the last fifty years. Through such a survey we may be able to understand better why, on the one hand, the *corpus juris canonici* expressly forbids Roman Catholics to use Protestant editions of the Bible, why the *Syllabus of Errors* issued by Pope Pius IX in 1864 damns Bible Societies along with Socialism, Communism, and Clerico-Liberal Societies

1 M. Reu, *The Augsburg Confession* (Chicago: Wartburg, 1930), pp. 111-112.

as "evils,"[2] while on the other hand Archbishop Alfrink of Utrecht recently gave the Roman Catholic *imprimatur* to an Evangelical translation of the Bible into Frisian, why Joseph Lortz, the Roman Catholic Reformation historian, recommended that the text of the Luther Bible be revised in such a way that it might receive the ecclesiastical *imprimatur* and be used by the Roman Catholics with notes as many of the great Evangelical hymns are used by all German-speaking Christians.[3] In Germany and Austria the restoration has reached such proportions that it is commonly spoken of as a *"Bibelbewegung,"* and in France one encounters the *"mouvement biblique."* How is one to understand the previous restrictions placed on printing Bibles, studying them on the part of priests, or reading them on the part of the mass of the faithful in the vernacular? The great Father Pius Parsch, Augustinian canon of Klosterneuburg, near Vienna, and leader of the *Bibelbewegung* until his death two years ago, wrote in an article entitled "The New Renaissance of Biblical Studies in the Roman Catholic Church":

> I shall admit with all frankness that during the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries in our church the distribution of the Bible to the common people was very meager. Though there was no general prohibition which impeded the Scriptures from being read by the common people in the vernacular, yet there existed great restrictions in the use of the Bible by simple parishioners. The church established that the use of the Bible in the vernacular tongue would depend on the permission of the Roman Congregations. The fourth Tridentine pronouncement gave permission to the individual Christian to use the Bible when he is so counseled by his priest or confessor. . . .
>
> Upon asking what is permitted today according to the Catholic Church concerning the study and reading of the Bible, we can answer:
>
> (1) Any person is authorized to read versions of the Bible in the vernacular if the translation has notes and has been approved by the Papal See or by a Bishop in peace and communion with Rome.
>
> (2) Editions of the Bible which are published by those who are not Roman Catholic can be used by theological priests for study.
>
> (3) Permission to use any prohibited version of the Bible can be obtained in the same way that it is obtained to read other prohibited books.[4]

To understand this situation we must remember a number of factors. For example, there was a "hardening up" process which was Rome's answer to the challenge of the Reformation and which culminated in the decrees and decisions of the Council of Trent. Protective measures were formulated by which to preserve the church's own time-tested Vulgate and the authority of ecclesiastical tradition.[5] We must remember that reading the Bible, or appeal to the Bible on doctrinal questions, was considered a part of all heresies, from the lay preachers of Peter Waldo, the Wyclifites, the Hussites to every other variety of heretical

2 Cf. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis: Herder, 1955), p. 437.

3 Cf. *Die Reformation als religiöses Anliegen heute* (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1948), p. 270.

4 Translated from *Criterio* and reprinted in *Theology Today,* Vol. X (1953), pp. 45-46.

5 Cf. the decrees of the fourth session of the Council of Trent in any edition of the canons and decrees.

teaching. It had become the experience of the church that each new heresy sought to legitimize itself by appealing to the vernacular Bible. We must also remember that the Roman communion inherited a situation from the Middle Ages in which, though many manuscript and printed Bibles existed, both in Latin and the vernacular, thorough understanding of Scripture was a rare thing.[6]

In view of this situation, how is one to understand the quite remarkable biblical scholarship in the Roman Catholic Church and the distribution of millions of copies of the Bible in recent years? One factor is certainly that the anti-Reformation, anti-Protestant, defensive frame of mind has given place in recent decades to a new, positive, and aggressive Catholicism which will set its own standards and means of action without the anti-Protestant animus which has subtly determined it for four hundred years. Karl Adam's *Spirit of Catholicism* and his *One and Holy* illustrate this new mentality which is especially strong in European Roman Catholicism.

Coupled with this are pronouncements of recent popes on the study of the Bible. In 1893 the encyclical letter *Providentissimus Deus* was promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in which the Bible was assigned a prominent role and considerable freedom was accorded the exegete. In 1909 Pope Pius X set up the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and he re-established a program of biblical studies in the seminaries. In 1920 Benedict XV issued the encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* in which daily reading of the "Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles" is especially recommended to "learn spiritual perfection" and "to gather confirmations and illustrations of any particular doctrine we wish to defend."[7] Of most importance was the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* of Pope Pius XII in 1943. Here an impetus was given to textual studies and translations of the Bible from the earliest texts instead of from authorized translations, and in particular the Vulgate, commonly accepted in the church. Exegetes were encouraged to go to the original texts while not ignoring the Vulgate, which "in matters of faith and morals is entirely free of error."[8] The Scriptures were commended to priests as the source for sermons which would be of greater value to their people. As a result, a new mentality has begun to animate biblical research and teaching.

Another whole set of factors at work here was certainly the phenomenal strides made by Protestant scholarship in painstaking research into manuscript sources, into archeological remains and papyrus fragments, into word origins, and all the vast data relating to the Old and New Testaments. Roman Catholic scholars could not remain unaffected by this or refuse to take such research into consideration. At such centers of learning as the Catholic University of America,

6 Cf. M. Reu, "The Open Bible and Luther," *Cresset,* Vol. II (1938-39), Jan., pp. 8-13; Feb., pp. 21-25.

7 *The New Testament* (Paterson, N. J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1941), iv.

8 *Sources of Catholic Dogma,* p. 620.

Louvain, Nijmegen, Lyon, and other schools, Roman Catholic scholars have been quietly making contributions to textual study, to the theology of Old and New Testaments, and to interpretation. We shall not review here the imposing list of scholarly journals in this area stemming from these centers.

With the opening of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome it became possible to earn a doctorate in biblical studies. In 1937 a branch of this institute was established in Jerusalem with the aim of first-hand studies of both a popular and technical nature into historical, geographical, and linguistic problems. In Jerusalem the Dominicans and Franciscans also have Bible schools where manuscript study is carried on; they have co-operated in the impressive "Bible de Jérusalem," which was first printed in forty-three small volumes with introductions to each book and ample footnotes. The translation attempts to combine clarity and faithfulness to the original text with reproduction of the beauty and variety of biblical language. It is now available in a single volume with abbreviated introductions and notes, and in an attractive pocket edition. Sheed and Ward recently announced plans for an English translation. An authoritative edition of the Bible in Latin, which would conform more closely to the original texts than does the Vulgate, has been in preparation recently. The Psalter has already been translated—though some are very much opposed to the Ciceronian vocabulary used here—and some other books of the Bible are already complete in this new Latin translation.

Another important factor at work has been the endeavor to place the Bible into the hands of the people as their own book. Here it might help to relate the experience of the remarkable Father Parsch, who perhaps more than anyone else is responsible for the distribution of cheap editions of the whole Bible or parts in German-speaking lands. He described his own ignorance of the Bible this way.

> During the war I was a chaplain. I had my diploma of doctor of Theology and so had already studied something of the Sacred Books. I was in the Carpathian Mountains during the winter of 1916-17. We had much free time because military operations were paralyzed. The Russians were on one side and we on the other. Nobody bothered us, and one day I realized that I really did not possess any real knowledge of the Bible. I also understood that I did not know thoroughly the life of Christ. Of course I could cite all the selected paragraphs, but I was ignorant of how the Bible as a whole was united and composed. For example, a student of German literature (until recently, at any rate) was required to have a much more exact knowledge of the life of Goethe than that which our theologians need of the life of Christ! I asked that they send me from home a commentary of the Sacred Scriptures, and I began to read the Bible in a manner completely new for me. It was revealed to me as something totally new. I devoted myself principally to obtaining a mental picture of the life of Jesus as something supremely complete in its beautiful entirety.[9]

Father Parsch went on to organize Bible study courses with his novices, and also for crowds of the laity who gathered each week to penetrate more deeply into the meaning of the Bible. Such study groups formed the basis, among students,

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

laborers, professional people, of the "Biblical Movement." In Germany, too, where a hierarchy worlds removed from the myopic institutionalists of Luther's day promoted the movement, Bible studies, congresses, and weeks have been conducted under the jurisdiction of the ordinaries. The fact that aberrations have occurred at such gatherings is evident from "An Instruction of the Pontifical Biblical Commission concerning Biblical Associations, Congresses, and Meetings" given in 1955. Irresponsible and liberal views were expressed which were detrimental to the faith of the uninitiated.[10]

In the many volumes of his *Church's Year of Grace* Father Parsch presents the ideal and means of living from the scriptural texts as the church year revolves. He has shown how closely and constructively preaching can be integrated with the texts of the liturgy. His counterpart, in a sense, in this country is Msgr. Hellriegel of Holy Cross Parish in St. Louis, who in *The Vine and Branches* also promotes a Christ-centered and biblical Christianity. Father Hellriegel's preaching and catechetical instruction derive their entire approach from the saving power of the Word of God.

Another whole chapter would require a review of popular editions of Old and New Testaments in German, French, and English. Recent translations into English include, for example, the solid Confraternity of Christian Doctrine edition and Msgr. Knox's livelier translation. An outstanding translation into modern speech is to be found in the Kleist-Lilly *New Testament Rendered from the Original Greek*. In 1953 a new single-volume *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* was issued by the Catholic Biblical Association in England. In Germany the Riesser-Storr edition and Herder's *Familienbibel* and the *Kinder- und Hausbibel* are widely used. The "Katholisches Bibelwerk" was founded in Stuttgart in 1933 on the model of the "Evangelisches Bibelwerk" to promote both the distribution of Bibles and the popular understanding of the content of the Bible (in plans for daily reading, explanatory materials, etc.). The Bibelwerk has published over 5,000,000 Bibles and parts of the Bible, including the popular *Stuttgarter Jubiläumsbibel* and the *Taschenbibel*. In France, besides the *Bible de Jérusalem* sponsored by the Dominicans, three other translations are available: the Crampon, the Pirot translation, and the Maredsous Bible prepared by the Benedictines. A recent English visitor to Roman Catholic churches in France reported, among the new developments which were called dramatically to his attention since his last visit, the practice of balancing the open Bible with the reserved sacrament. Together they were honored as the sacraments of "God with us." Every sermon he heard was based firmly on Holy Scripture.

However, the same progress cannot be described for other lands and languages. Although Dr. Straubinger of the "Bibelwerk" was forced to leave Germany for South America under pressure from the Nazis in 1937 and prepared a

10 Cf. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII (1956), pp. 144-146.

new Spanish translation, it is questionable whether, as in the case of North America, Central and South American countries have anything like the continental European biblical revival. For example, in a book entitled *Catolicismo Chileno,* Humberto Muñoz, a priest, writes of the situation in Chile:

> At the time of the Counter-Reformation in Europe it was deemed necessary to restrict and regulate reading of the Bible. Now, on the other hand, that the circumstances are so changed, it is indispensable in every way to promote its diffusion and reading to the utmost. It is an indisputable fact that one of the greatest spiritual attractions of Protestantism is the reading of the Bible. Many of our Catholics, on the other hand, keep on believing that it is a prohibited book. The absence of the Bible is a shameful void in our Catholicism. . . . Up to the present we have no complete Bibles; those which come from the outside are so expensive that one is ashamed on being asked the price by someone interested in buying one.[11]

It is recognized that the improvement of Catholicism's own spiritual life is the only effective answer to the Protestant "peril" in Spanish-speaking lands. During the last decade, however, the beginnings of a "Biblical Movement" can be seen in these countries as well. We may conclude this section with a cautious, yet positive, estimate of the significance of the biblical revival in the Roman Catholic Church; in this we can join with the late Pius Parsch:

> Of course one cannot think that suddenly a great biblical movement has appeared among the Catholics. This is not so. We are only in the beginnings, and looking at the matter objectively, the situation is still quite bad for the Bible's cause, for up to now priests do not have real biblical scholarship and therefore do not preach the Sacred Scriptures nor conduct adequate Bible study. If the priest understands little or nothing, the people, naturally, will understand less. We cannot talk of a real Bible movement in the comprehensive sense of a popular movement among Catholics.
>
> It can be said, nevertheless, that we have turned to discover the Bible and that we know how great, luminous, and comforting this book is. The fact that we have recognized the treasure which we have in the divine texts is in itself a great step forward. Thirty years ago this was not known; at that time the Sacred Scriptures, the water of life, were held in small esteem, and people were content with the water of the cisterns, the "broken cisterns," as Jeremiah says.
>
> I believe that the discovery of the Bible by Catholics is a step toward the other churches, a step toward the *Una Sancta,* in part because the other churches hold the Bible in such high esteem, and in part because we, through the Bible, are arriving at the essence of Christianity. Perhaps we shall stop walking on the outskirts of true Christianity, which play such a great role in Catholicism and from which spring its axis and foundation; and we shall come nearer to the essential truths and the center of the divine Master's teachings.[12]

With this evidence of activity in the field of Bible study only a small part of the whole story is told. The new art which has found its inspiration in Christocentric and biblical themes presents another chapter. How shall we evaluate the permission, which is now only a matter of time, to read Epistle and Gospel lessons

11 (Santiago de Chile, 1946), pp. 130-131.
12 *Ibid.,* pp. 51-52.

at high Mass in the vernacular? We hope that Lutheran pastors and theologians will soon set themselves to the task of evaluating the new catechisms emanating from Germany and France. The former, being translated into English and adapted by Father Clifford Howell, may revolutionize catechetical instruction here as it has in Germany. Each point is introduced by a passage from Scripture which provides the basis for the dogmatic presentation. Scripture is supposed to form the *unica regula et norma* of the dogmatic material.

In Germany and France speculative and moral theology have turned during recent years from preoccupation with philosophical problems of Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle to a more strictly biblical framework. The Scripture text does not appear under some thesis with the introduction, *Probatur ex sacra scriptura,* but it is given an opportunity to speak in its own right, with due recognition to historical background, literal sense, and grammatical considerations.[13] Moreover, one cannot consider the "Biblical Movement" without reference to the new interest in the Fathers, who are understood as the receivers of the apostolic tradition and the great commentators on the Bible. Particularly in France has biblical scholarship been carried on in close conjunction with the study of the Greek and Latin Fathers.[14] Furthermore, study of religion curricula in high schools, colleges, and universities would not only reveal that many of these give prominent place to Bible study, but a considerable number organize the entire curriculum about the Bible.

We are often so engrossed in delineating our differences with our divided brethren that we are quite unaware of the living, functioning parishes, the university work, theological scholarship, and biblical study they are engaged in. Our differences on such central questions as the meaning of justification, the relation between Law and Gospel or between Scripture and tradition, remain real and require honest and thorough investigation. But let us not underestimate the power of the Word of God as it has resounded and now resounds more brilliantly in the Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther would have rejoiced greatly to see the biblical revival in that great section of Christendom with which he broke so reluctantly.

13 Cf. T. Worden, "Is Scripture to Remain the Cinderella of Catholic Theology?" *Scripture,* Vol. VIII (1956), pp. 2-12. Fr. Roderick MacKenzie, S.J., in a paper entitled "The Concept of Biblical Theology," *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Catholic Biblical Society* (1955), explores the relation between Scripture and dogma. He proposes that Scripture be understood as *evidence* on theological questions rather than *proof.* See also F. Joseph Jungmann's pioneering work, *Die Frohbotschaft und unsere Glaubensverkündigung.*

14 See especially, in this connection, the work of Jean Daniélou, S.J. On the concerns of this article consult his "Holy Scripture: Meeting Place of Christians," *Cross Currents,* Vol. III (Spring, 1953), pp. 251-261.

The Age for First Communion

By William D. Streng

CONFIRMATION has seen many changes in the history of the church. Only obliquely can we find references to it in the New Testament. By the Middle Ages it had become a sacrament, only to be deprecated later as "stinking oil" by Luther. The time came when it was a mark of heresy in the Lutheran Church to practice confirmation, though now it is almost a mark of heresy not to follow recent tradition which requires that every Lutheran be "confirmed." These changes reflect varying conceptions of what the church is, the needs of the times, and the meaning and purpose of confirmation. Shall we merely tolerate this custom or shall we give it active and willing support?

In our day confirmation is under fire from several quarters. Karl Barth has attacked it from Scriptural grounds, saying (1) that there is no basis in the New Testament for the baptism of infants, (2) that baptism follows instruction and ought to be the answer "to the question of the divine assurance and the divine authority of the Word which has before been heard and which has already been taken hold of and affirmed in faith."[1]

Our answer, of course, is that God's Word is sufficiently powerful to effect change in man, for we find a very close relationship between water and Spirit in the New Testament. Not in the way that Tertullian found it, for he tried to demonstrate an essential relation between water and Spirit, referring to Gen. 1:1, where it is said that in the beginning the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, and from then on the Spirit is closely associated with water.[2] The primitive church, it seems, recognized and guarded against this view when it emphasized (John 3:3-5) that one cannot be born again of water only, but of water and the Spirit. The question still arises, whether it is right and proper for us to force baptism upon an infant who has no way of making a personal decision in the matter. He had no deciding vote in the matter of his physical birth either. And if Jesus is already Lord over heaven and earth, then he is also Lord over every individual. Much more difficult to answer is the interpretation of I Cor. 7:14, where St. Paul describes children (unbaptized?) as holy because of their parents.

Confirmation is also under attack for functional reasons. It has not been very successful in establishing a close, vital, radiant relationship between young people and Christ. Choose whatever set of statistics you prefer, they are all definitely

1 Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe* (1947), p. 30.
2 Tertullian, *De baptismo*, ch. 3.

discouraging. J. Edgar Hoover released a report in the summer of 1953 in which it is stated that "seven out of eight children quit church and Sunday school attendance before they reach fifteen years of age." Surely, Lutheran statistics are more favorable. Yet a survey reported in *Concordia Theological Monthly,* March, 1953, revealed that in 1950 Lutherans lost 28% of those confirmed and in 1949 they lost 32%.

In a thesis written by Harry C. Carlson in May, 1953, filed in the library of Wartburg Theological Seminary under the title, "A Study of the Ratio of Confirmation to Infant Baptisms in the American Lutheran Church," it is stated that we confirm only 72% of those whom we baptize as infants (p. 51). If now, as some maintain, we lose half of those confirmed, then we retain 36 out of every 100 infants baptized.

Our practice of confirmation is also questioned for historical reasons. Of all the ancient rites of the church none met with such opposition at the hands of the Reformers as that of confirmation. They attacked it especially from a doctrinal point of view. denying that it was worthy of the dignity and validity of a sacrament, maintaining that it undermined seriously the sacrament of baptism, and ridiculing the spectacular ceremonies which had gradually become a part of it.

In the preface of his Large Catechism Luther says, "Yes, while they would beautify the same, they adorn it with abominable blasphemies, since they boast that this sacrament is more honorable than baptism, and all those who have not been smeared with their stinking oil they call half-Christians, while their whole ceremony is nothing more than the play of comedians or, much more, the unchaste play of apes staged without any skill of mimicry."

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (XIII, 7:6) confirmation and extreme unction are discussed together, "Confirmation and extreme unction are rites received from the Fathers, which not even the church requires as necessary to salvation, because they do not have God's command."

In the Smalcald Articles confirmation is discussed in connection with ordination ("The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops," 73), "We have spoken of ordination, which alone, as Jerome says, distinguished bishops from other elders. Therefore there is need of no discussion concerning the other duties of bishops. Nor is it indeed necessary to speak of confirmation, nor of the consecration of bells (or other tomfoolery of this kind), which are almost the only things which they have retained."

In a mellow mood, however, Luther could state that "confirmation should not be observed the way the bishops want it, but we do not object if every pastor examines the faith of the children to see whether it is good and sincere, lay hands upon them, and confirm them" (*W. A.*, 11, 66). It must be noted, however, that Luther's Catechisms were not written for confirmation instruction but for the patriarchal housefather and the parish pastor. When confirmation was re-introduced

it was done because of the practical necessity of regulating who should be admitted to the Lord's Supper. By the seventeenth century confirmation had practically disappeared. When it arose again toward the end of that century, because of the consistent efforts of Spener, it arose to stay.

Because of its checkered history and because of the questions raised in our day concerning this rite, the time has come to re-evaluate our practice of confirmation. It may be wise once again *to separate confirmation from first communion.*

Historical evidence supports the wisdom of this assertion, for no single or composite view of confirmation is really satisfying. Developments of the last three centuries have posited three major views of confirmation, which differ according to one's views of the sacraments. Some favor the catechetical view, which places the major emphasis on indoctrination. Preliminary examination and profession of faith are stressed according to this view. The danger is, of course, that instruction easily becomes an intellectual exercise, and faith is equated with verbalization of doctrines.

The sacramental view of confirmation has also been developed. While the supporters of this emphasis do not dispense with instruction, they put more stress on the laying on of hands. For, it is maintained, confirmation is bi-polar; it rests upon the sacrament of baptism and prepares for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Individuals who hold this view find it difficult to avoid a secret distrust of the complete efficacy of infant baptism, for confirmation then is really the completion of baptism. This view can also lead to the conclusion to which Oscar Cullmann came, "For this reason emergency baptisms are meaningless. A dying child will not belong to this earthly Body of Christ."[3]

The third view underscores the governmental aspects of confirmation. There are certain rights and privileges inherent in a Christian congregation, one of which is the right to determine who shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper. A person who is confirmed is a communicant member of the church. Administratively this is a convenient arrangement, for it assists in maintaining some sort of church discipline. The confirmation certificate is proof that now one has reached a degree of maturity. The modern emphasis upon the church as an organization finds kindred views in this emphasis of confirmation and easily leads to organizational imperialism.

Some of the difficulty can be avoided if we separate confirmation from first communion. With mechanical regularity we hear statements to the effect that children at age fourteen are too young to confess their faith intelligently. Experience supports this assertion. What is the alternative? To raise the age to eighteen years? What right have we to deprive a young Christian of the Lord's Supper for the first third of his life? A very limited survey revealed that pastors prefer to con-

3 Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Chicago, 1950), p. 34.

firm at a later age while parents voted for setting confirmation earlier. This tension could be resolved if Communion were offered to children whose education would be continued so that they could confess their faith publicly upon reaching a more mature age.

We ought to establish once again the connection between the Lord's Supper and the Passover. In the Passover the child participated when he was weaned, i.e. at about the age of four years. The Paschal meal was served to the whole family, the number being limited to thirty participants. While the comparison may not be a weighty or definitive one, we use the same line of reasoning in comparing infant baptism to circumcision. "In the Old Testament children were circumcised on the eighth day, and circumcision in a sense served in the place of baptism (Col. 2:11, 12)."[4] Unfortunately we refer to the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple as analogous to our confirmation, though his journey to Jerusalem had no connection with the Passover.

All evidence seems to point to the communion of children in the early church. The Eastern Orthodox Churches throughout their history have communed infants soon after baptism. Their argument is, If God can give faith to an infant in baptism why not when he communes?

Many statements culled from a study of ancient and medieval history indicate early communion. According to the Didache, Ignatius of Antioch, and Justin Martyr, the Lord's Supper is a family feast, taking its religious character from the *eucharistia* that precedes and follows the eating and drinking. Cyprian speaks of children who received *"cibum et poculum"* (bread and cup) at the beginning of their life. Communion of children is attested by the Apostolic Constitutions, VIII, c. 12, 13. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) required all children, from their seventh year on, to confess at least once a year and to commune on Easter Sunday. Luther made no effort to change the age for first communion.

Hence the Lutheran Church of Denmark recently decided to commune children at the age of seven since "that was the practice of Dr. Martin Luther."[5] History favors our thesis.

What psychological or educational arguments help us reach a reasonable conclusion in this matter?

From an intersynodical study conducted in 1950 it was discovered that the average age for confirmation of children in Lutheran churches of America is fourteen.

In the same year Randolph Crump Miller, speaking of confirmation, stated, "Such a vow requires much more maturity than a child of 14 has! He may be

4 M. Reu, *An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (Columbus, 1947), p. 163.

5 *The Lutheran*, July 4, 1956.

emotionally ready but not intellectually."[6] No one questions whether it is possible to convince young people of that age to vow fidelity at the church's altar. At that age, Dr. Paul Lindberg of Augustana Theological Seminary reminds us, a boy will also vow never to kiss anyone of the other sex, while later experiences may change his mind. And we question whether the church should confront a group of twenty young people and say, "You will all be ready to confess your faith at ten o'clock on the morning of April 14 next." Such a confession ought always be personal and entirely voluntary. Dr. Reu suggests that in order to avoid all constraint catechumens "be assigned no particular place which would make it easy for the congregation to determine the number of catechumens participating in the sacrament, or ever to challenge such investigation."[7]

Then there is the argument that ages 12 to 14 constitute the "golden period for memorization." That may be true, though the question remains, Do they mature more rapidly today because of television and radio, or more slowly since they are no longer required to work at that early age? Whatever the golden period for memorization may be, is it necessarily the best age for communion and confirmation? Is my confession of faith primarily a matter of memorization?

There are more vital reasons that can be advanced in favor of the assertion that communion given at an earlier age should be entirely separate from confirmation.

1. Participation in the Eucharist does not depend upon intellectual maturity or upon a rational acceptance of statements concerning this sacrament.

Luther's statement concerning baptism, "My faith does not make baptism but receives baptism" (*Br. A.*, 3, 240), is equally applicable to the Lord's Supper. We accuse those of rationalization who maintain that children are not to be baptized since they can not possibly understand that sacrament. With what logic or validity can we maintain that children are not to receive the Lord's Supper because they can not understand it? The operative word in this entire paragraph is "rationalization," and it seems that all of us are guilty of it.

"To make understanding a prerequisite for being a real participant in an act of worship is to permit secular standards of education with their supreme emphasis upon the intellectual to extinguish that which is uniquely Christian about Christian education. One grows and develops in the Christian faith not by understanding a mass of facts and propositions, but by entering into a relationship within which alone the facts of our Christian heritage can be understood. . . . This is not to say that the Christian church is in any sense anti-intellectual, but only to insist that it is more than intellectual and supremely so. It is relationship and response, demand and promise, communion and union."[8]

6 Randolph Crump Miller, *The Clue to Christian Education* (New York, 1950), p. 50.

7 M. Reu, *Catechetics* (Chicago, 1918), p. 633.

8 David R. Hunter, "Families at Worship," in *Religious Education*, March-April, 1957, p. 100.

2. There is, of course, a real ambivalence here, for who decides who is ready for Communion, and on what basis? It is fairly certain that not all of our young people will be ready on April 14 at ten o'clock. Many pastors, to be sure, discuss this personal aspect of confirmation with their confirmands, yet the social pressure in the average parish is so strong that few would have the courage to ask for postponement in this matter.

Since age seven has more historical precedence than any other age, it is not used arbitrarily here, though age four has in its favor the practice of centuries in the pre-Christian era. At the age of seven children are such wonderful mystics! They are receptive as at no other period. Is not this the characteristic to which Christ refers when he says that adults ought to become more like them, and unless they do they will not enter the kingdom of heaven? Rather than ask, Are they as ready as we adults are? the question should be reversed. Martin Rang describes this relationship well, "The relation of the child to the Word is not primarily comprehension, or even confession, but devotion."[9] "It is possible for twelve-year-olds to understand the classic definition of a sacrament as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,' but the definition as it stands is likely to be a mere verbalism."[10]

The seven-year-old may lack a sense of history, and he has little interest in words and doctrines, but he marvels at the mysteries of life and death, and his life is primarily one of relationships. Unless destroyed by premature attempts at difficult explanations, the seven-year-old retains a sense of wonder. Gesell calls this the "eraser age," for at that time Johnny writes and erases, builds and tears down again in order to rebuild. This is also an "assimilative age, a time for salting down accumulated experiences and for relating new experiences to the old."[11]

3. Pedagogically we ought also remind ourselves that the Lord's Supper, following the pattern of the Passover, is primarily a family meal. For the seven-year-old the family is an integral, welcome, indispensable social entity. Age 13 often brings a marked and sudden withdrawal from any participation in family activities, and by age 14 many are highly embarrassed by their families. They are hard-boiled in their ethical outlook; in fact, it is fun to be bad sometimes.[12] Family patterns which have not been set by the time children are fourteen will be extremely difficult to establish thereafter. It may well be true that some of the vibrancy and radiancy of the early church stemmed from the fact that the Lord's Supper was received by the entire family. The union in the sacrament is horizontal as well as vertical.

4. Few statements would find such universal agreement as the assertion that

9 Martin Rang, *Handbuch für den biblischen Unterricht* (1947), I, p. 116.
10 R. C. Miller, *Education for Christian Living* (New York, 1956), p. 219.
11 Gesell and Ilg, *The Child from Five to Ten* (New York, 1946).
12 Gesell, Ilg, and Ames, *Youth* (New York, 1956).

adolescence is a difficult period. It has been compared with purgatory, neither heaven nor hell. Recent studies seem to indicate that it may not be quite so turbulent as it is usually pictured, and among primitive peoples it hardly exists. Yet those of us who have lived with adolescents know that it is a delicate period of transition. Why not give our young people the comfort and courage that is available in the Lord's Supper—or do we not expect anything to happen in the lives of those who commune? Must we wait until a child has reached maturity, or shall we help him grow?

One of the most vulnerable aspects of our type of confirmation is the complex, which no one seems to be able to counteract successfully, that Christian education ends when we are confirmed. Few tendencies are as detrimental to the life and growth of the church as this one.

Some relief may be obtained if confirmation is encouraged at a later age without depriving children of the Lord's Supper. Then, if one's education has continued, the church could grant the right to serve as sponsor at age 18, full membership at 21, perhaps adding another category for those who would be permitted to serve as delegates at church conventions. If it is true, as is stated repeatedly, that the best members of our church are those who were instructed as adults, we could recapture some of this advantage by instructing our children until they are adults.

There is even a grave danger in premature indoctrination. "A child which has been thoroughly indoctrinated faces even more severe adjustment difficulties if he finds his attitudes toward religion changing."[13]

There remains the usual question: Can a child of seven examine himself? If an infant can "repent and be baptized," then God can give this gift to an older child also. A better reply, however, is that a child of seven can examine himself on his level, and that is all a gracious God requires, for even "a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench" (Is. 42:3).

But are not our children reared in an entirely different spiritual climate than formerly? In the early church and during the period of the Reformation the whole atmosphere of the home was Christian. Tradition, school, and state combined to establish a Christian environment. Hence a child would be ready much earlier to commune than in our "sensate culture." If this is true, then it is, first, an indictment of the homes of our churches and, second, an added incentive to reintroduce Christian forms into the family circle in the hope that the Holy Spirit may give them proper content. Whether it is more difficult to bring one to repentance today is the concern of the Spirit.

In all probability there are errors in the reasoning presented here. But one

13 J. Horrocks, *The Psychology of Adolescence* (Cambridge, 1951).

finds encouragement in the fact that there is something more dangerous than errors in logic. It is the weakness of the church of the Middle Ages, of the church at Laodicea, of the Pharisees, and of ancient Israel, to avoid all types of self-criticism. It may be in order to practice some of this in the area of confirmation and first communion.

Life and Thought in World Lutheranism

Church and State in Germany

A divided Germany continues to issue storm warnings. These bear not only on the cold war but also on the faith and witness of the church in today's world. For Roman Catholicism the two Germanies present a problem. Yet for Protestantism generally and for Lutheranism particularly this tenth anniversary year of organizational unity calls attention to more than a problem. Indeed, if the trials and temptations which the various regional churches in East and West Germany progressively face are any indication, then times of further grave testing lie ahead. To this theme, especially as it is unfolding in East Germany, there will presently be occasion to return. Meanwhile, however, crucial times may gain a dimension of historical depth and inner balance by a recognition of some anniversaries that mark 1958.

Ten years have passed since the formal organization of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) as an all-German "federation of Lutheran, Reformed, and Union churches." Ten years have also passed since the more confessionally committed Lutheran churches within the EKD formed the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD). Against the background of Nazism's seizure of power and of the hastily set up German Evangelical Church twenty-five years ago (1933), the achievements of such partnerships as the EKD and the VELKD disclose their exciting significance. For these are forms of ecclesiastical organization born amid conflict and achieved in the wake of catastrophe. Their leaders and members see here another evidence of the mercy and grace of God in dealing with his church.

This year also marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the death of one of German Protestantism's most notorious baptized members, Karl Marx (1818-83). Today a Marxian-inspired dialectical materialism holds over 900 million people under its sway, and some of his most fanatical descendants, seeking to bring East Germany into ever greater Communist conformity, are finding the church their most hated obstacle. And the church which they are opposing is one that has in recent years displayed increasingly the spirit of one of Marx's most able contemporaries, John Henry Wichern (1808-81).

The 150th anniversary of Wichern's birth coincides with the 125th anniversary of Hamburg's famed "Rauhes Haus," which has often been characterized as the birthplace of Germany's great overall venture in Christian service, the Inner Mission. This year also marks the centennial of the Johannesstift, that institute in Berlin begun by Wichern and his specially trained deacons as part of a Christian approach to the problems and needs of people in the modern city. The celebrations in Berlin in May and in Hamburg in September, are helping to intensify the commitment of the EKD

and the VELKD, as well as of the refurbished Evangelical Church of the [Old Prussian] Union (EKU), to the manifold tasks of *diakonia*—of courageous and self-giving Christian service. What Wichern had to say about such matters, also in terms of social action, is being made available in a new nine-volume edition of his writings. Edited by Professor Peter Meinhold, of Kiel, the first volume has appeared this spring as the latest product of the active "Agentur des Rauhen Hauses" in Hamburg.

This year, 1958, also marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of another Lutheran pioneer in *diakonia,* Wilhelm Loehe (1807-72). Like Wichern, but with a closer concern for confessional Lutheranism, Loehe linked his pioneering in the Inner Mission to his interest in theology, worship, and the world-wide task of the Lutheran Church. While American Lutheranism's debt to Loehe is well known, the celebrations which have been held in Neuendettelsau and elsewhere in Bavaria have highlighted his career in fresh perspective. His collected works, edited by Klaus Ganzert and appearing in the Freimund Verlag since 1951, have already reached five volumes. His importance for German Lutherans, especially for those in the VELKD, is very great today, particularly with regard to his interpretation of the catholicity of the church and of the relations of Lutherans to Christians of other communions.

While anniversaries thus draw attention appreciatively to the past, they also provide prods for purposeful action in the present. Men like Wichern and Loehe, each in his distinctive way, looked forward to a day for far greater partnership among Germany's regional churches than was the case in the 1850's. They wrote and acted along these lines. Today much of what they strove after has been achieved. Yet the circumstances of this kind of fulfillment are, if anything, very difficult. So it is the bold perseverance, as well as the broad vision and ardent faith of these leaders a century ago, that strikes a responsive chord among many of Germany's pastors and laymen today. How much such perseverance is needed, may be illustrated in the annual all-German synods of the EKD.

In 1957 the EKD synod was devoted to the theme of *diakonia,* "Christian Service in a Changed World." In line with plans carefully worked out since 1951, the Inner Mission and the post-war Evangelical *Hilfswerk* were officially merged. While the older Inner Mission had operated independently of the regional church administrations, the newer *Hilfswerk* was actually a child of the churches. The plight of war and reconstruction had driven home the fact that for the churches *diakonia* is not an auxiliary but a basic function, extending down into every parish. Thus, for over a year, the Diaconic Council of the EKD has guided the affairs of the merged operation whose headquarters have been set up in Stuttgart. What Hamburg's Bishop Herntrich told the delegates of the 1957 EKD synod, meeting as they did in the Johannesstift in Berlin-Spandau, remains pertinent:

> We have a church that Wichern did not have—a far more unified church, an ecumenical church, a church that in our own time

has known conflict and suffering and the power of confessing him in the face of demonic fury; a church that has learned from all this that service in Christ's name is the duty of every believer. (*Das Diakonische Werk,* No. 4, April, 1957, p. 4.)

To the host of faithful workers in the parishes and agencies across the land, the Synod sent a message of encouragement. In terms that the rank and file membership could also understand, the Synod concluded this message, which was also a policy statement:

Diakonia is piecemeal. But God can complete the piecemeal in suffering. Through suffering God moves towards his goal. *Diakonia* often enough is defeat. But through our defeat God wins his victory. The hope with which God himself embraces our world makes us free to serve.

Man endeavors to conquer the world with his reason and technology. Yet in this same world man is threatened and harassed. Among us there is little hope for a future, and much resignation about the nature of man. . . .

All such things summon the church of Christ in its *diakonia*—be it ever so meager and sketchy—to bear witness through action and patient suffering, affirming that God loves this world and has given it a goal. The risen Lord creates a resurrection—*diakonia.* And whoever believes the Holy Spirit has hopes for man even where human hope stops. (*Evangelische Welt,* April 16, 1957, p. 220.)

Yet the main emphasis of this synodical meeting was overshadowed by prolonged and acrid debate over the issue of an agreement between the EKD and the West German Government whereby chaplains would be provided for the reconstituted armed forces of western Germany. To the Communists in East Germany this arrangement was used as the basis for a vitriolic attack on the church. The East German churches and their leaders, notably Dr. Otto Dibelius, bishop of Berlin, were accused of subversive activity and of being agents of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, under which the West German forces would serve.

During the remainder of 1957, and on into 1958, the situation in East Germany has grown increasingly difficult for the churches. For example, the mock trial of the Leipzig University pastor, Dr. Siegfried Schmutzler, concluded on November 28. His sentencing to five years at hard labor was based "not on his particular brand of *Weltanschauung,*" but "solely and alone on his actions hostile to the state." (*Evangelische Welt,* December 16, 1957, p. 731.) To which Dr. Hanns Lilje remarked:

The trial of Dr. Schmutzler appears as the first heavy advance within a concentric attack on the Evangelical Church inside the German Democratic Republic. A state that can impose a heavy workhouse penalty upon one of its citizens on no other "criminal grounds" than relations to Evangelical Academies, talks on Sunday-observance, and similar matters—which are not punishable in any civilized state—loses the right to be regarded as a legal government. (*Informationsblatt für die Gemeinden in den niederdeutschen lutherischen Landeskirchen,* No. 23, December, 1957, p. 412.)

The Schmutzler trial brought out vividly the other areas of tension between church and state in East Germany. These include such matters as the imposition of further travel restrictions on church leaders; the curbing of opportunities for pastoral visitation in public hospitals and university

clinics; the pressure on school teachers to resign officially from church membership; the general freedom of atheistic attacks on the church and the Christian faith, with no corresponding opportunity for rebuttal; the progressive introduction of civil substitutes for baptism (name-giving ceremonies, complete with public congratulations and gifts from the labor union) as well as for confirmation. (*Evangelische Welt,* March 16, 1958, pp. 154-155.)

Since the traditional church rite of confirmation has been under growing attack for the past five years, the 1958 all-German synod of the EKD is centering its attention on the responsibilities of the church in the realm of Christian education. Press reports from East Germany claim that some 90,000 boys and girls of confirmation age in East Berlin and throughout the German Democratic Republic are this year receiving a civic youth dedication *(Jugendweihe).* This marks an increase of about 25,000 over the number claimed for 1957. By 1959 the Communist leaders hope to attract at least 50% of the eligible confirmands away from the church and into their Red youth dedication ceremonies. The instructors providing the requisite hours for such atheistic orientation are usually either school teachers or specially trained members of labor unions. The decision for parents to permit their children to attend such classes often comes hard, but—as the veteran Dean Heinrich Grüber in Berlin stated publicly—compliance follows in the wake of anxiety and fear. *(Op. cit.,* April 16, 1958, pp. 218-219.)

Meanwhile, the East German decree against religious instruction in universities and institutions of higher learning seems in the process of being extended to the "released time" that had been accorded for religious instruction in elementary schools. If applied along lines already indicated, no instruction in the Christian faith would be permitted within two hours before or after the normal school day. The work of the many catechists would thus be sharply curtailed, while the desire of many parents—whose permission is now prerequisite to the instructing of their children—would be frustrated. No further elaboration is here necessary to show that the religious freedom, guaranteed by the constitutions of the several East German states, is here overridden. *(News Bureau,* National Lutheran Council, May 1, 1958, pp. 2-3.) In many quarters, however, the witness of the many courageous church members continues impressive. Pastors have made it clear that they will not confirm young people who have decided for the civic youth dedication. Churchmen and lay leaders. likewise, have even expressed satisfaction that the issues between the avowed atheism of Communism and a living faith in Jesus Christ are now being stated so clearly. Only then, it is said, will confirmation—which has so long been simply a popular custom—once again become a pointed confession of faith. *(Evangelische Welt,* April 1, 1958, pp. 186-187.)

As the EKD synod in 1957 found its theme of *diakonia* overshadowed by outside forces attacking the military chaplaincy provided for West Germany, so in 1958 the synod, meeting once again in Berlin, has had to grapple with a serious debate over the production, further testing, and use of nuclear weapons. Led by Dr. Martin Niemöl-

ler, president of the Church of Hesse, and others like the former West German minister of the interior, Gustav Heinemann, these opponents of atomic weapons are also champions of a united Germany. Although they are by no means the only group of churchmen who oppose the atomic threat and seek German unification, they are more eager to make the EKD speak out officially on the atomic issue. Whether this agitation will prove divisive and will weaken rather than strengthen the sorely tried EKD remains to be seen. In any event, storm signals continue to come from the homeland of the Reformation, and Christians elsewhere will do well to heed them.

E. Theodore Bachmann

Conditional Baptism in Germany

Since World War II many questions concerning Baptism were put to the churches in Germany in a new form. Voluntary and enforced movements of refugees, expellees, and displaced persons, accompanied by the separation of families and the destruction and loss of records, introduced uncertainty about the Baptism of some persons. The validity of other Baptisms was questioned—on the one hand, those performed among strange and radical sects, and on the other hand, those performed before 1945 by extremists among the so-called "German Christians." The seriousness of such problems has recently been aggravated by the growing practice of Roman Catholic priests to rebaptize converts from Protestantism. In one way or another all these instances involve what Roman Catholics call "conditional Baptism," and for the guidance of its ministers and people the Theological Commission of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) prepared the following statement *(Informationsdienst der Vereinigten Evangelish-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands,* March, 1958, pp. 3, 4):

"1. The Theological Commission has arrived at the conviction that conditional Baptism, as this is practiced in the Roman Catholic Church, does not conform with the teaching concerning Baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and is accordingly not to be observed. Only an unconditional and a public Baptism (that is, one carried out in the presence of witnesses) can give the person baptized and the Christian community full assurance that the person baptized has been born again of water and the Spirit and has been received into the fellowship of justified sinners.

"2. Whether the 'Baptisms' of certain sects can be recognized as Christian Baptisms must be determined by the church individually in the case of each sect. When members of such sects become Lutherans and their Baptism cannot be recognized either because it was in flat contradiction to the institution of Christ or because it is supposed that this was very probable, the convert must be baptized.

"3. If by conscientious inquiry it cannot be ascertained whether a certain person has been baptized or not (as in the case of a refugee), he is to be baptized, despite the risk that it may later be established that the said person had already been baptized.

"4. If there is uncertainty concerning the validity of the Baptisms of certain individuals (for example, in the case of those administered by some

'German Christians'), such individuals are to be baptized. However, Baptisms administered in our churches are not to be questioned unless there are conscientious scruples on the part of the pastor or of the person baptized.

"5. In cases in which Baptism is administered because it cannot be established with certainty whether the person to be baptized had previously received Christian Baptism or not, the act of Baptism must be the same as in all other Baptisms. However, reference must be made to the peculiarity of the circumstances in an admonition in the service. It is to be asserted in this admonition (or address) that it is not the intention, in the act which is to follow, to perform a Rebaptism contrary to the institution of Christ but that what is to be done is done in an inescapable emergency in obedience to the command to baptize. It appears to be appropriate to conclude this admonition (or address) with a formal prayer.

"6. In cases 4 or 5 a pastor is not to administer Baptism without the approval of his dean (superintendent, provost, etc.).

"7. The Evangelical Church must defend itself against the contempt of the Roman Catholic Church for Evangelical Baptism, which according to the order of all Evangelical Churches is administered with water in the name of the triune God. Catholic practice is the more vulnerable because it is the common Christian principle, long recognized by the Roman Catholic Church itself, to recognize as valid such Baptisms as are properly administered outside the jurisdiction of a particular church (cf. the controversy over heretical Baptism, A.D. 255-257)."

THEODORE G. TAPPERT

Correspondence and Comment

Lutherans in American History

For the sake of the record permit me a few remarks by way of reaction to Dr. Ahlstrom's article on "The Lutheran Church and American Culture" in the November, 1957, issue of the Quarterly (pp. 321-342). I refer particularly to his friendly criticism of the alleged "motif" of my recent book, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America.*

In the first place, Dr. Ahlstrom's dissent from the main "motif that pervades the book" is not real. It is only that he does not fully understand me; he imputes a motive that is not stated in my Preface and should not be inferred from it or from the text of the volume. I did not intend to evaluate the influence of Lutherans on other Christians or on the American Republic, or vice versa. I did not mean to say or imply that American Lutheranism is "something indistinguishably blended in with the luxuriant foliage of American denominationalism" (p. 326) or that Lutherans of today should "blend indistinguishably into the American scene" (p. 327). That would make it futile, if not impossible, to teach or write a separate history of Lutheranism in America. I feel that such inferences from my Preface or my method are not warranted.

What I did intend to do, and all that I promised in my Preface, was to make use of a new teaching device. The purpose is to enable the student to get a long perspective upon the situation of the Lutheran churches within present-day American society, which includes present-day American Christianity and culture. And this, I felt, could well be done by pointing out the parallel that exists between the beginnings and development of Lutheranism in this country and, on the other hand, the beginnings and development of Christianity in general and society in general in this country. Two lines may be parallel without being drawn with reference to each other; both of them may be drawn with reference to a third line, and this third line, the line of causation, may be on a very different plane. The parallels do not warrant the conclusion that the churches are trailing behind the political or cultural chariot, or the reverse. They do not warrant the conclusion that Lutherans are accommodating themselves to other denominations on the American scene, or the reverse. In this book I made no effort to trace that line of cause and effect.

Earlier editions of my book were titled *The Lutheran Church in American History.* The title was meant to imply nothing more than the use of general American history as a convenient framework in which to set the external history of the Lutheran churches in this country. From this as a teaching device I believe that Dr. Ahlstrom does not really "dissent" because he himself says that his disagreement does not affect "most of the factual, external history of the tradition" (p. 327).

Secondly, Dr. Ahlstrom follows Martin Marty in contrasting my method with what Marty has called the "cliché version." In defending that version Dr. Ahlstrom indicates that he would prefer to have the history of American Lutheranism presented as in a state of "tension" with American culture. I would suggest that we distinguish between "tension" and "abstraction" (my Preface, p. vi). I, too, believe that if the Lutheran Church, or the Christian church for that matter, is to be true to her mission in the world or any part of it, her inner spirit and witness must be at tension with the world and general culture and society at large. We Lutherans, it is true, are "not of the world"; but the actual fact of history is that we are "*in* the world." Our tension with the world does not take us "out of the world." It does not abstract us from the world. Indeed, to be in a state of tension there must be some kind of contact and relationship, if only a relationship of opposition. To bear our Lutheran witness we must be cognizant of our secular and non-Lutheran environment. We must, to take just one example, speak the same language as those to whom we would bring our witness. Every church body or constituency is primarily a community of faith, but it is also a sociological community and has some things *in common* with other communities as well as some things *in tension*. It is this aspect of a church's history that is the first object of a student's attention.

To ignore this fact and to present the life and work of a church in detachment from the social and cultural environment in which it grew up would fail to provide adequate perspective for the reader. The usual or "cliché version" of our denominational history tends to abstract our history from its long-range significance and to detach our people from their rightful place in present-day society. My theory is that while the Lutherans in America have always had a message for other Christians and a mission to the world of general culture, they never were and are not now an encysted group in America, and our churches have never been a haven for recluses in flight from the world. Without contact there could be no tension, but only abstraction.

Moreover, this presentation of Christian history in the framework of general history is not so novel and isolated as some of my kind reviewers have implied. It may be comparatively new in denominational histories, and my first edition in 1923 was so proclaimed by reviewers. But in general histories of Christianity, it is now usually taken for granted. For example, Dr. Latourette, foremost of church historians in contemporary America and Dr. Ahlstrom's older colleague in Yale University Divinity School, in his standard work, *The History of Christianity,* makes much of "the changing world situation." He places each new period of Christian history squarely against the background of the new world situation at that time. And this does not even remotely suggest the "indistinguishable blending" of Christianity with its environment. It does not close the historian's eyes to "the exceeding great power" of the Christian witness. Latourette's device for creating "perspective" for his readers is to point out the pulsations in church history as the Christian Gospel responds to the varying challenge of general history.

In like manner the exceeding great power of the Lutheran Church in her history in America has been possible because at each stage she has been "contemporary" with the American scene. This has never meant that the "church has slipped into a status of complacent irrelevance" (p. 323). Far from it. And the fact is that a careful reading of Dr. Ahlstrom's own article indicates at many points that he himself would not attempt to write Lutheran history in abstraction and isolation. The difference between us is, as he says, chiefly "a matter of emphasis and nuance."

With this large measure of agreement with Dr. Ahlstrom, I nevertheless have some difficulties with his proposal for a new outline of Lutheran history in America: Survival, Definition, and Consolidation. This analysis and interpretation would leave wide gaps in the total narrative, and it would base upon too narrow a view of the total scene. For example, it does not seem correct to take such an isolated fact as the persecution experience of Lutherans in seventeenth century New Netherland and play it up as typical for Lutherans in all the colonies throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those two centuries were a period of survival for Lutherans only in the sense in which they were a period of survival for all the Christians in all the colonies. Lutherans had their distinctive problems in this period but they can best be understood under the comprehensive term of colonialism which gradually changed into independence.

Then, following the Age of Survival, Dr. Ahlstrom reaches the Age of Definition in "the half-century after 1840" (p. 330). This seems to leave a gap of forty or fifty years. And the period of "definition" would be interpreted almost entirely in the light of nineteenth century immigration, "a time when Lutheran doctrine came to prevail in the Lutheran Church" (p. 333). This is indeed cliché and stereotype, and it overlooks some important, relevant facts. The facts are that there was a considerable volume of geniune Lutheran doctrine in America from Muhlenberg and Berkenmeyer continuously, that after the relative flatness of the whole theological landscape in the first forty years of that century, and *before* the beginning of the immigration of conservative Lutherans from Europe, *before* the Definite Synodical Platform, and *before* the General Council began, this stream of genuine Lutheranism had begun to break out into full view *(Basic History,* pp. 133-135). The pains that accompanied this outbreak had their "contemporary" parallels in all the other major church groups in America, and even among the Lutherans of Europe and the Roman Catholics and the Church of England. Even in American politics it was a period of "definition" of the federal constitution that was in no way related to immigration, and here, too, it led to war. Everywhere it was a return to historic traditions, and almost everywhere it involved strife. Immigration does not explain it. This wider perspective must not be ignored because it can be very helpful to the student.

The last of his periods, the Age of Consolidation, Dr. Ahlstrom would begin with the change in the immigration laws about 1920. And while this approach seems constricted, it does at last

lift his outlook to the broad horizons and to "interrelated trends" (p. 334) of "the twentieth century church in America" (p. 335) from which "Lutherans . . . have not been isolated" (p. 335).

Then, too, I have difficulty with Dr. Ahlstrom's generation-concept, his implied classification of himself and me as to the succession of generations. When he puts my interpretation in the second generation and his in the third, I cannot accept the compliment. The trouble is that Dr. Ahlstrom begins his succession of generations with mid-nineteenth century immigration. Again I plead for a longer perspective. He should begin at least a whole century earlier. And that would place me in the sixth generation, which is now passing from the scene, and it would place him in the seventh generation, which is just now coming up. The fact is that when Dr. Ahlstrom's ancestors came to these American shores, my ancestors had been here for more than a century. They had become thoroughly "American" both in citizenship and in Lutheranism, and in the middle of the nineteenth century they extended open arms to Dr. Ahlstrom's sturdy Lutheran ancestors to welcome them to the free Republic which my ancestors had so painfully helped to establish nearly a century earlier. In like manner, thankful for his compliments, I am happy to welcome so scholarly and sturdy a young Lutheran as Dr. Ahlstrom to the ranks of American Lutheran church historians. It is my hope that he will help write our history in this country with new "emphases and nuances" but, I trust, without cliché abstraction or detached interest or cultural isolation. Let each generation conserve and improve the heritage of all preceding generations.

Abdel Ross Wentz

Book Reviews and Notices[1]

One in Christ. By K. E. Skydsgaard, translated by Axel C. Kildegaard. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957. 220 pages. $4.50.

This little volume is not an attempt to establish harmony of position between the Evangelical Lutheran and the Roman Catholic conviction. Wherever an emphatic "yes" is possible on doctrinal agreement, it is given due recognition. There is no inclination, however, to minimize the definite "no" wherever the situation demands it. The author manifests a genuine desire for a better understanding, criticizing what to him fails to express the Gospel, no matter which church is involved. An interesting contrast to this approach is the book written by a Roman Catholic, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*, by Louis Bouyer.

In the first chapter, "Fellowship and Division," Skydsgaard points to the danger of the ecumenical movement in looking upon externals. Many things foster divisions. Only one thing fosters fellowship, and that one thing is a person, Jesus Christ. In him the author finds the focal point from which all solutions must be approached. The truth in Christ is differently expressed, within the New Testament and later in "dogmas." Yet the unity in him cannot be broken. Sin and human limitation, we know, are the cause of division and strife. But, says the author, "just as sinful disunity is a mystery (*mysterium iniquitatis*), so the power of Christ in a divided church is a mystery, a mystery of grace and mercy" (p. 15). The church must cultivate continuously that which is already a reality in Christ. Here there can be no compromise. That church which cannot say "no" can probably not say "yes." At any rate, there would be no power in its "yes." Neither easy-going subjectivism nor stubborn objectivism can solve the problem, the author rightly maintains. Today the two churches need to re-appraise their "yes" and "no" in the light of contemporary facts rather than solely in the light of the historical causes of the controversy. The entrenchment in a historical "no" can readily become an easy escape-mechanism. The door should always be left open for conversation. The door is Christ. This is the principle by which the author seeks to look at the things that unite and divide the two churches.

Sacrosanct confessions may readily prove to be a roadblock along the way. On the other hand, a superficial ecumenical movement might foster new isolationism and sectarianism or simply a religious potpourri. The Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches are not two "isms," but two forms of Christianity represented by living men searching for Christ in constant spiritual motion. Whatever their differences, these two forms have never been able historically to disengage themselves from each other. They will always stand related.

The author speaks of two types of religion, (1) the institutional, cultic religion and (2) the prophetic, personal religion. Romanism with its exterior solidity represents the first type. Here the divine almost takes on material form. In the second type, Protestantism, the "Word" constantly comes from above, according to the prophetic view. The differences lie deeper than the plane of the history of religion and the psychology of religion.

In the two churches the "Roman Petrine" and the "Pauline evangelical" are to be found in a tension-filled unity as complementary "truths." The danger in separating the two is that Catholicism becomes pure objectivity and Evangelicalism pure subjectivism.

The area of meeting today is not in theological debate but in Bible study. To read the Bible without confessional spectacles and doctrinal prejudices must be encouraged, according to Skydsgaard. This does not imply an easy "confessional peace." Superficial

1 Books reviewed or noticed in these pages may be purchased through your church's publication house.

tolerance is no answer. A new theology (ecumenical and otherwise) must have "teeth" in it.

When the author turns to "Scripture and Tradition," he does not play down the bitter debate between Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism. In Catholicism the Bible is never the only rule of faith. The Bible must always be interpreted in the light of tradition. In Lutheranism tradition is always secondary. The absence of such a "principle of interpretation" (even though wrong) has played a tragic divisive role in Protestantism.

The author asks whether Evangelicalism could meet on a common ground of tradition with Catholicism. His answer is a decisive "no." The real question is, "Who is Lord in the tradition?" Each church is tempted to make itself lord of the tradition. Protestantism may not call this "infallible" but nevertheless makes it "sacrosanct." Tradition readily becomes "content with itself." In this struggle the Catholic and Evangelical Christians are bound together in a common "yes" and separated by a mutual "no." But above this reciprocal "yes" and "no" stands the living Lord himself, who in the midst of his church's unity and disunity will continue to fulfill his work in his creation (p. 75).

When dealing with the "Church" the author also finds basic agreements. God wills a new humanity through which will be completed the work begun in Christ. But here the agreements cease.

The Roman Catholic Church is a perfect, earthly (legal) society, visible and tangible, with the same priesthood, the same apostolic authority, the same language in the Mass, etc. Obedience to the pope is the final test. Where is the humble carpenter? While Christ is the church's only Lord, his representative (the pope) exercises visible rule.

Unfortunately, the author points out, Evangelicalism has a very weak consciousness of what the church really is. This was not true of the Reformers, who recognized the fellowship of the church and its "signs," such as preaching the Word and administering the sacraments which precede the faith of the individual. Where the "Word," Jesus Christ, broke through, the church did not need any external guarantee. "It was Christ himself who stood behind it" (p. 105).

In his chapter on "Faith and Grace" the author is at his best. Here appears the greatest chasm between the two churches. This is the question of salvation, of man's relationship to God. According to Catholicism grace is a divine power infused into man, almost a material substance. So Aquinas can say that sanctification means deification. Faith plays a part. It is not a direct response to God's grace but is an intellectual assent that motivates the will. To believe is really to accept what the church teaches, and the Gospel becomes a new law.

According to Luther the situation is totally different. Man's relationship to God has fallen apart completely. Man has turned toward himself. Through God's law man comes to know sin, guilt, and judgment. But judgment is God's "alien work." His nature is to love. Here is God's grace in action through Christ. Faith is and expresses this new relationship. "There is a great difference between giving assent to a list of truths of revelation and committing one's entire person to Christ" (p. 138). In this new relationship man becomes as "a Christ to his neighbor" in loving service.

In the Roman Church the priest in his sacramental function becomes a "second Christ" to his parishioners. Evangelicalism holds that in the sacraments Christ himself comes to man.

The Copenhagen theologian is well equipped for this critical, analytical study of the two churches. He has given many years of research to the problem. This reviewer finds in him no tendency to slant his views one way or the other. The author compares the cardinal doctrines of the two churches without fear and apology. Only when the churches become "One in Christ" can they remove the things that now divide. In him the final and common "yes" must be found. This is good reading for Roman and Protestant Christians alike. It will give the reader a better understanding of Roman Catholicism and a deeper appreciation of Protestantism in general and Lutheranism in particular. The author writes from the perspective and conviction of Lutheran theology, yet without narrow, dogmatic prejudices.

Lutheran pastors and laymen would do themselves a service by reading this volume.

It is unfortunate that a book as expensive as this little volume has neither an index nor any sort of bibliography.

James J. Raun

The Unity of the Church. A symposium edited by the Department of Theology, Lutheran World Federation. Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1957. 167 pages. $3.00.

From 1954 to 1956 the Commissions on Theology and Liturgy of the Lutheran World Federation were studying the problem of the unity of the church and the theology of worship. The papers from these meetings are now presented in this volume, and offered not as a consensus but as expressions of individuals which might stimulate further discussion.

Over half the volume is devoted to the problem of church unity, and the remainder equally to the Lutheran Confessions and to theology of worship. The review which follows will not attempt to summarize each article but to give an over-all picture of the discussions.

All the writers agree that the unity of the church is a fact: it is a unity in Christ. Thus the real problem faced by these papers is not the establishing of unity, but the problem of healing an *external disunity* around this *internal unity.* If there is any keynote to all of the papers, I would say that the term "fellowship" might be used. This is a word that recurs frequently. T. A. Kantonen (Hamma), Ernst Kinder (Münster), Peter Brunner (Heidelberg), Anders Nygren (Lund), and Martin Heinecken (Philadelphia) use this term "fellowship" and not "institutional unity" as the goal to be sought.

Thus Kantonen speaks of the unity we seek as fundamentally "a unity in the Spirit," and the essence of the church as *koinonia*-fellowship. What is to be sought is an overcoming of disunity, which is caused by sin, and a creation of fellowship, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nygren's paper is concerned only with admission to sacramental fellowship and not the total problem, but on the basis that believers are "one in Christ," members of other churches should be permitted fellowship in the sacrament. Kinder argues that the goal is not an external unified organization, but fellowship between organized churches. The concept of "different churches" is quite in keeping with "unity in Christ," for the former is institutional and the latter spiritual. What breaks the latter is "divided churches," and this is what must be overcome. Brunner argues that we must avoid two extremes: demand for one church government in one organization, and readiness to settle for mutual admission to Holy Communion. To reflect the spiritual unity in the historical churches, more than the latter is demanded. A true *Kirchengemeinschaft* (church fellowship) requires in addition a mutual recognition of ordinations, a formal indication of the nature of the fellowship, and, most important, such church fellowship must be confessional fellowship. This does not mean that others must accept our Confessions but that the churches must come together for "binding doctrinal conversations." Heinecken seems to agree with Brunner when he says that oneness of organization is not primary, but disagrees slightly when he denies the need for acceptance of certain formulas of confession. All that is needed is agreement on "a certain understanding of the gospel and of how the God relationship is established and maintained." It is dubious whether Brunner or Kinder would agree that this is enough. Karl Karner (Budapest) gives a New Testament study of "church" and "churches" and comes out with practically the same ideas as the others, that the New Testament church had *koinonia* despite differences in the churches. Thus the church at Jerusalem was more legalistic, whereas the missions of Paul were not, but whatever the differences they did not break the fellowship, the deepest indication of which was community in Holy Communion.

When it comes to how this fellowship shall be achieved and what is the basis for "church fellowship" (Brunner), the papers do not always say the same thing, although the viewpoints might be reconcilable. Except for the papers by Conrad Bergendoff (Rock Island), who really presents the theme

("Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches"), and Karner, the papers argue the problem from Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, and especially the statement: "For the unity of the church it is enough to agree on the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments." As aforementioned, Heinecken argues that the "doctrine of the gospel" is a "qualitative matter of the total orientation and total understanding of the gospel and of the way in which the God relationship is established and maintained." Apparently this prohibits fellowship with the Roman Church, but Heinecken also points out differences with the Reformed on this basis. Leastwise it is not agreement with a system of theology. Nygren agrees that the doctrine of the gospel does not indicate consent to a theology, but he says *"docere"* means the same as preaching here, and the gospel ought to be preached "in keeping with its own meaning." Kantonen says the emphasis must fall on "gospel," not on doctrine, but there is no conflict, and one should stress "living doctrine," for this is what the gospel is. Kantonen, however, stresses the need for creeds, especially the historic creeds, but also that the theology being forged in ecumenical debate must become confessional theology. When Nygren discusses the *"consentire,"* however, he denies that confessional agreement is demanded by Article VII, for nothing is said there about it. Kinder, on the other hand, while saying that *"consentire"* cannot mean consent to some theology (all are agreed on that, it appears), says that it does mean common confession, and confession must not be confused with theology. A common confession is not needed for fellowship as such, but for "full fellowship" it is. Now, maybe these varying viewpoints can be reconciled—from the view of "total orientation" to the "gospel itself" to "creeds" and to "common confession" but it is not worked out here.

I thought that Brunner's paper, "The Realization of Church Fellowship," was suggestive. He states that the first three notes of the church defined by the Nicene Creed —"one, holy, catholic"—are of a piece and characterize the "one spiritual body of Jesus Christ." The fourth note, "apostolicity," is of another category (as also Karl Barth maintains), placing the church "squarely within the history of the world." This mark has to do with the apostles, and thus with history, but on this point the organized churches disagree as to what is apostolic. Some maintain that it means the authenticity of the ministry from the apostles on down (apostolic succession) whereas others stress the authenticity of apostolic teaching (the Gospel) from the apostles to now. Brunner argues the latter, of course, and in order to guard the apostolic Word and repudiate false doctrine, the churches should engage in "binding doctrinal conversations." Thus the notes of the church of the Augsburg Confession (Gospel purely preached and sacraments rightly administered), which Kinder cites as the notes of the church, might be better qualified as the distinguishing marks of the apostolicity of a church. Even the Augsburg Confession states them in this fashion when it says that the church (which is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic) is the congregation of saints *in which* the Gospel, etc. It does not so much *define* the church by these marks as it says *where* it may be found.

In the second section, "The Confession," Brunner, Kinder, and Regin Prenter (Aarhus, Denmark) all agree that the Confessions establish Holy Scripture as the authority of the church. And to establish this authority, Brunner remarks, it is not necessary to repeat the inspiration doctrine of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Kinder calls the Confessions the "regulative principle" and the Scriptures the "constitutive principle" of the church. The Scriptures are the original witness, and the Confessions are a "response" to this witness—both Kinder and Prenter stress this. As Prenter comments, the Confessions do not tell a preacher *what* he shall find in Scripture, but *how* he shall hear Scripture, namely, as a man of faith, a member of the church. Thus all three would agree on the importance of the Confessions, but these are guides to Scripture, not substitutes for it. My own reaction is that these papers only begin to treat the problem of Confessional loyalty, which must be more deeply probed. There is even the question of how many Confessions, for Prenter cites one, the Augsburg Con-

fession as the classical formulation, although admitting that other churches accept more.

The last section, "The Theology of Worship," has less unity than the other two. The first two papers do discuss a common problem, however, the place of the sermon in the liturgy. Bergendoff, in his paper, maintains the equal importance of both sermon and liturgy and remarks that no Lutheran architecture has yet been developed to show the equal balance between pulpit and altar. Bo Giertz (Gothenburg, Sweden) points out that the liturgy expresses the priestly office of the believers, whereas the sermon represents the prophetic office of Christ. The sermon is fundamental, however, for it creates faith—even for believers—but the liturgy is essential to fill out the sermon, give the theme for the day, and give a framework for the sermon. The sermon must always be prophetic, not "liturgical."

Then Christhard Mahrenholz (Hannover) writes of the relationship of the Confessional Service to Holy Communion. He argues that the former should be separated from "its fixation with Holy Communion" and made an independent service. This is the original meaning of confession, and it would help the Holy Communion to be a more natural part of the regular service since the Confessional Service now overloads a regular service. The major point, however, is that the Confessional Service is *not* a requirement for Holy Communion in its real meaning. It was intended to be a *casus,* i.e. intended for special cases, for depressed or frightened Christians, and so on. Luther even made it a voluntary service, but it so happened that in the early development of the Reformation he united it with Holy Communion because of the faulty catechetical instruction of congregations. This was an emergency situation, however, which has hardened into tradition and has become a mechanical preparation everyone must undergo prior to Communion. By making the Confessional Service an independent one, says Mahrenholz, it would heighten the "personal" side of confession, would make it more meaningful for the participants, and remove it from the gaze of those not participating in Communion. While it should not be a compulsory prerequisite to Communion, it should be offered before Holy Communion for those who want it, and the people could be encouraged to participate, but not compelled to.

Carl F. Wislöff (Oslo) has the last paper of the volume, "Worship and Sacrifice." In his paper Wislöff examines the viewpoints on sacrifice connected with the Lord's Supper. He feels that Melanchthon probably misunderstood the view of the Roman Church. Luther did understand, but he argued that what is offered to God cannot be received by men. The Words of Institution further show that Christ offered the body and blood to the disciples, not to God. The atonement is the one sacrifice: "the body and blood which we receive *has been* presented to God as a sacrifice; *now* it is a gift received by us." Wislöff examines various views which attempt to relate the one sacrifice to the Lord's Supper—the Roman view which says that Christ's intercession now permits the church to offer the Mass as a renewed (not repeated) instance of the one sacrifice which is a new sacrifice by the church, or the Anglican view that we receive the Calvary sacrifice in the Lord's Supper. The author believes that neither can be substantiated from the New Testament. Only the sacrifice of thanksgiving can be connected with the Lord's Supper, but that concerns us and not the sacrament itself.

All in all this is a volume Lutheran theologians, pastors, and laymen will want to peruse if they wish to get a sample of present-day Lutheran thinking on some basic issues. There are many loose ends, perhaps little that is new, but it does suggest some avenues where Lutheran thinkers might pursue more intensively the problems that are presented.

William H. K. Narum

The Renewal of the Church. By W. A. Visser 't Hooft. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956. 128 pages. $2.50.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, has produced an excellent statement on the need of Protestant denominations today to rediscover themselves as the new people of God. In the period since the last war it has become a

very general conviction that in some sense the churches stand in need of renewal. This need has formed the subject of conversation between the churches. Although it is agreed that only a radically transformed church can fulfill its task in relation to the modern world, there has been little reflection on the nature of the renewal we seek. This book, therefore, raises some basic questions about the meaning of renewal.

In Chapter I, "The Old Covenant and its Renewal," the author points out that the Old Testament records realistically the repeated infidelity of the people, but at the same time it recognizes gratefully God's amazing patience in his dealings with them. He describes the whole story of Israel as "the dramatic dialogue between the Maker of the Covenant and the breakers of the Covenant." The Covenant is broken when the people forget who they are and turn "a personal relationship which demands grateful response into an established privilege to which they are entitled." But God's mercy is so great that instead of breaking off the relationship, he makes a new departure and renews the Covenant. It was the task of the prophets to break down this self-satisfied and idolatrous piety. Thus "the renewal of the church in the Old Testament is essentially the liberation of the church out of its self-made prison." In the course of developing this line of thought, 't Hooft throws good exegetical light on basic Old Testament passages and produces an excellent, brief, and lucid essay on the Old Testament doctrine of the church.

The same can be said of his second chapter, "The New Covenant and the New Creation." Again one finds exegesis that is sound and clear, as well as a fine summary of the New Testament doctrine of the church and the Holy Spirit. The essential question is, "What is the relation between the new and the old, between that which has come into the world in Jesus himself and the old established order of things? The answer is that the new situation demands new forms of life." But the newness which Jesus brings cannot be understood in any simple manner. The new is not merely future, nor is it wholly realized. The newness of life has an eschatological character and can thus only be described dialectically. "The Christian is a new man; he is to seek renewal; he is being renewed." The author explains in detail the meaning of this concept of newness for the church.

Chapter III, "Old and New in the Early Church," discusses with great clarity the tension between antiquity and newness in the early church. Since a tendency to obscure the difference between the church and the kingdom of God arose soon after the apostolic period, and since antiquity became the decisive criterion in the struggle against heresy, the author concludes that the proper tension was not maintained and that the biblical concept of renewal was blurred.

In Chapter IV, 't Hooft makes a study of "The Renewal of the Church in History." He suggests some most interesting historical estimates of the main large-scale attempts to arrive at a renewal of church life. He concludes that actual renewal in the biblical sense was not achieved or maintained because like other institutions the church seeks the security of the status quo and "slides back from the open, dynamic life . . . to the closed, introverted life of self-perpetuation." Yet, where the Word of God is present, there is always the possibility of renewal.

The author outlines his own position in Chapter V, "The Way of Renewal." He rejects five concepts of renewal and sets forth a sixth position which is drawn from insights provided by Luther, Calvin, and Barth. This concept involves the recognition of the divine initiative, the need of recourse to Scripture, dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit, the presence of genuine repentance, the restoration of true fellowship in our congregations, a re-discovery of the apostolic, missionary character of the church, and an acknowledgment that there is in history no renewal of the church which is not threatened by relapse into old ways.

In Chapter VI, "The New Church in the Old World," the question is raised, Does the earthly existence of the church really manifest the transcendent, creative, renewing power of God? The author argues that the church's witness is weakened by its entanglement with the world, its introversion, and its irrelevance, but that the Holy Spirit can liberate, transform, and vitalize the

church so that it can be the imperfect instrument of salvation.

In the final chapter, "Renewal and Unity," the author points out that the themes of unity and renewal are not competing objectives but are interdependent aspects of that eschatological life which the church is called to live. He cites evidences that this neglected dimension of the church's life is being rediscovered in our day and appeals for further study of the relation between continuity, unity, and renewal.

This is indeed an excellent and invigorating study.

HAROLD H. DITMANSON

Fundamentalism and the Church. By Gabriel Hebert. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957. 156 pages. $3.00.

This book deals with the issues raised by the controversy between Fundamentalism and Modernism in their respective interpretation of Scripture and the Christian faith. Father Hebert is a leader in the Student Christian Movement and is therefore very conscious of the conflict between this group and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, which represents a more fundamentalistic tendency. He is neither a fundamentalist nor a modernist, but would like to mediate between these two groups, recognizing that each may make a legitimate contribution to the Christian faith.

The term Fundamentalism is derived from a series of books called *The Fundamentals* published in this country between 1909 and 1915. These books aimed to set forth and defend the fundamental Christian doctrines, and most of them were of a very high standard. But the Fundamentalist movement became associated with a mechanical view of Scripture which rejected all critical investigation, and also with the famous Tennessee "monkey trial" some decades ago.

The main part of the book is devoted to a presentation of Father Hebert's own view of the nature and interpretation of Scripture. He develops a view in which the Bible is both the words of men and the Word of God. The fundamentalists tend in the direction of the Monophysite heresy, which denied the true humanity of the Lord. They deny the human element in the Bible by claiming for it an inerrancy which it does not possess. They are also on the side of "the theology of glory" as over against the "theology of the cross," and hold to a materialistic conception of truth. Because the Bible is human, it is legitimate to subject it to critical study; and because it is God's word to us, it demands our complete acceptance and obedience. The student of the Bible should be daringly critical and at the same time "deeply sensitive to the Spirit and obedient to God's will."

The question is whether this Neo-evangelicalism which is the heir of Fundamentalism but refuses to accept the name can be brought into a fruitful discussion within the ecumenical fellowship. Hebert pleads for the unity which God has given us in Christ and for a willingness to enter into a conversation in which both partners are prepared to listen as well as argue.

Father Hebert has undertaken a very difficult task. His approach compels him to try to state his opponent's case for him, and there is always the danger that the opponent will refuse to recognize the picture. This is especially true when he speaks of bibliolatry and mechanical dictation. There are also some other drawbacks to the book. The controversy between the Student Christian Movement and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship is confined mostly to Europe and Australia and is not so relevant to our situation. The long summary of a novel by Bishop Bo Giertz seems rather out of place in this connection. When Father Hebert comes to discuss the church and the sacraments, it becomes very apparent that he holds strictly to the Anglo-Catholic point of view. In spite of these criticisms the book is a valuable contribution to the discussion of our understanding of the nature of the Bible and the interpretation of its message. What he says needs to be said, and he has presented it in a kind and irenic spirit.

E. H. WAHLSTROM

The Gospels, their Origin and their Growth. By Frederick C. Grant. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957. 216 pages. $3.75.

It is good to see Professor Grant return to Gospel criticism, the field of writing in

which he excels. His excursion in New Testament Theology (*An Introduction to New Testament Thought,* 1950) proved rather unhappy; but if he finds it difficult to formulate theological judgments with clarity and adequacy, he is remarkably adept in the pursuit of scientific criticism of the Scriptures.

This volume on the Gospels is presented as a completely new work, although it is admitted in the foreword that certain parts of the book incorporate material from its predecessor, *The Growth of the Gospels,* 1933. It is fair to say that this book is much more than a revision, however, and it may claim a place for itself in its own right among the best works in the field of Gospel introduction. All the evidence is reviewed and the conclusions of the important investigators are examined, including American, British, and Continental European scholarship. The result is a fine distillate achieved by most rigorous discipline in the scientific analysis of Scripture, a distillate which gives us a manual of the method as well as the results of the investigations of the past century. To ignore this research would be like a modern physicist ignoring the progress of physics from Newton to Einstein.

Grant begins with a defense of what he calls "the new approach to the Gospels." By this he means the new understanding of the history of the oral tradition (*Formgeschichte*) which preceded the written records of the Gospel witness. The Gospels are not literary creations, "biographies of Jesus," but rather they are social products which grew and developed over a period of two generations. This means, in the second place, that the Gospels are not four independent testimonies of four individuals who happened to be visited by the Holy Spirit, but they are the collective witness of the church. The New Testament is the church's book! The astonishing but true conclusion which Grant draws from this approach is that if we believe in the overruling inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the life and book of the church, this historical community-tradition is just what we should expect. To this reviewer this is the most remarkable insight in the book, for, although the author offers it only as an aside, it makes it possible for him to say that while there is no room for a theory of verbal inspiration, nevertheless the inspiration of the Holy Spirit rules over the totality of Scripture because it is the Lord of the living tradition which produced Scripture (p. 16).

Grant offers a most helpful delineation of the method used in scientific criticism, by which it is generally agreed today that Mark is the earliest Gospel, that Luke and Matthew follow 20 or 30 years later with additions from a common source (Q) and peculiar sources (L and M), and that John belongs to the early second century as the Gospel of the Hellenists. Mark is characterized as the *Petrine* Gospel with influence from Judean and Roman sources, according to the tradition from Papias. Luke is the *historian* of the Gospel writers whose poetic style makes him Grant's favorite. Matthew was a Jew from Antioch whose concern was to write a Gospel of the *church.* And John wrote out of a background of Gnosticism with the specific purpose of defending the Gospel against docetic tendencies among the gnostic Christians.

It is only with this last chapter on John that I would offer criticism of the conclusions Grant presents. Grant seems not to have taken into account some of the more recent work of Stauffer, Cullmann, and Henshaw on Johannine criticism, and he is altogether too loath to admit the possibility that the Dead Sea Scrolls may require a complete revision of our understanding of John's so-called Hellenism. The evidence at hand does not warrant the conclusion that John was a Greek, nor that the Gospel was of second century origin. Rather than calling John a mystic and his book the Gospel *of* the Hellenists, I would describe him as an undetermined apostle who wrote the Gospel *to* the Hellenists.

This is the way of scientific criticism—one generation's science is the next generation's superstition. A refusal to weigh new evidence results in a dogmatic adherence to an outworn theory. *E pur si muove!*

The book contains helpful charts of the interrelationship of the Gospels, on the multiple source theory of Gospel origins, and especially good outlines of all four Gospels

in the appendix. Also there is a fairly good selected bibliography.

ROBERT PAUL ROTH

The Library of Christian Classics. Vol. IX: Early Medieval Theology. Translated and edited by George E. McCracken in collaboration with Allen Cabaniss. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957. 430 pages. $5.00.

Readers of the QUARTERLY have had their attention called to the joint undertaking of American and British scholars known as *The Library of Christian Classics.* Consisting of twenty-six volumes, the series is an excellent selection of significant Christian works written before the end of the sixteenth century. The widespread inability even of well-educated readers to use Greek and Latin with ease plus the desirability of fresh translations provide sufficient justification for this series.

The selections included in this volume cover the early Middle Ages (ca. A. D. 400-1100), sometimes called the "Dark Ages." That this "popular" description of these centuries is unfortunate has been increasingly emphasized in later years, and the appearance of this volume ought to help dispel some of this "darkness."

The book is divided into four parts: "The Nature of Divine Truth," "God's Word in Holy Scripture," "The Voice of the Preacher," and "Ideals of the Priesthood." The first part leads off with the chronologically appropriate work of Vincent of Lérins, *The Commonitory.* It is this book which contains the now famous Vincentian formula for Catholic truth and for judging novel teaching. Catholic truth is that which is based on the principles of ecumenicity, antiquity, and agreement, i.e *quod ubique, quod semper, et quod ab omnibus creditum est.*

Three other works complete Part One: two eucharistic writings which came out of the controversy between Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus, and "A Reply to the Three Letters," which was a part of the debate over predestination centering about the unhappy monk Gottschalk (ca. 850). Regarding the treatise by Radbertus, it should be noted that only portions of the original have been translated; it is too long for complete translation in a volume of this size. The necessity of the abridgment is especially regrettable since this is the first work by any writer to be devoted exclusively to the Lord's Supper and since it calls attention to a number of interesting questions: why bread and wine are used, why water is mixed with wine, why bread and wine undergo no visible change in appearance, etc.

Part Two is devoted to examples of medieval interpretation of Scripture. Here one will find selections from commentaries by the well-known Pope Gregory I and Alcuin, the great teacher of the Carolingian renaissance. Lesser known commentators, Claudius of Turin and Rupert of Deutz, are also represented.

Part Three begins with what appears from the title to be a book of directions on homiletical method, *How to Make a Sermon,* by Guibert of Nogent (d. 1124). Actually it is more an exhortation on the necessity of preaching. Five sermons by the famous Rabanus Maurus of Mainz make up the bulk of this section.

Part Four includes an anonymous "Address to the Clergy," which admonishes priests to exemplary personal conduct and instructs in the carrying out of parish duties, all the way from proper celebration of the Mass to preventing women from dancing in the nave of the church. A far superior work from the literary and intellectual point of view is *Precepts to Priests,* by Theodulph of Orleans. The last selection by Venerable Bede is a part of his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People.* Entitled "On Bishop Aidan," it is the source of our information concerning the celebrated monk of Iona who became the first bishop of Lindesfarne. It is a valuable vignette of a Celtic bishop.

This volume should have special appeal to pastors, seminary students, and others interested in the medieval church. Those who desire to pursue further studies will find the introduction and bibliographies of great help.

E. CLIFFORD NELSON

Luther's Works. Vol. 31: The Career of the Reformer. Edited by Harold J. Grimm. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957. 416 pages. $5.00.

A part of the new American edition of *Luther's Works* being published by Concordia Publishing House and Muhlenberg Press, this is one of three volumes with the subtitle "The Career of the Reformer." The writings to be included in the three volumes are those which illustrate the development of Luther's thought as he moved through his career. The present volume includes writings from the years 1517 to 1520.

The usual convenient introductions are included for each treatise. The reader, unlettered in the history of the Reformation and unacquainted with such names as Cajetan, Eck, Karlstadt, Pope Leo, and John Tetzel, need not avoid Luther's writings in this edition. We are introduced to the persons and events we need to know as we read the selection which follows. The "occasion" for each essay or treatise is explained in enough detail to give the reader adequate orientation.

Most of the writings in this volume appear for the first time in English. (Conspicuous exceptions are "The Freedom of the Christian" and the "Ninety-five Theses.") But the content will not be strange to those acquainted with Luther. He is hammering out the grand design of his theology which will forever mark his work and the faith of evangelical Christianity. God's free grace in Christ, the sufficiency of faith, and the authority of the Gospel are all spelled out here. Alongside these key principles are such vestiges of medieval faith as the belief in purgatory, a naive faith in legends, the unique position of the pope, and a Thomistic emphasis upon a logical "proof" for Christian doctrines. (Luther frequently tells us that he will cite proofs both from Scripture and from "reason!")

There is a full quota of the quotable in anything Luther writes. Some which caught my eye here are: "The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it" (Heidelberg Disputation, p. 57). "Indeed the remission of guilt is far better than the remission of any kind of punishment" (Explanation of the Ninety-five Theses, p. 103).

Luther's usual, exhaustive, direct, and bold manner of presenting his material characterizes these works. Here, even at the beginning of what was to be the Reformation, Luther gives evidence of having studied and thought through the cardinal doctrines of the faith. He is convinced of the truth of what he writes and presents it without equivocation. One could wish for brevity at times, but who are we to judge? At least we can never accuse Luther of having said something only once!

In addition to the writings referred to above, this volume includes "Disputation against Scholastic Theology," "Preface to the Complete Edition of a German Theology," "Proceedings at Augsburg," "Two Kinds of Righteousness," "The Leipzig Debate," and "Why the Books of the Pope and His Disciples Were Burned by Doctor Martin Luther."

SIDNEY A. RAND

Luther Today. Martin Luther Lectures, Vol. I. By Roland H. Bainton, Warren A. Quanbeck, and E. Gordon Rupp. Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1957. 164 pages. $2.75.

In the fall of 1956 the first of a series of annual "Martin Luther Lectures" was delivered at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. The purpose of the series is to provide an academic and yet popular arena for the presentation of the fruits of Reformation studies and for the stimulation of Luther research in America. The inauguration of the program owes much to the initiative and enterprise of Professor Gerhard L. Belgum and his colleagues on the faculty of the ELC college on whose campus the lectures are held.

The nine lectures delivered in 1956 are here made available in published form. With a light touch Professor Bainton, of Yale University, deals with some minor themes: Luther's comments in the Table Talks on birds, dogs, and babies, and his use of indirect discourse in expositions of the Bible in sermons and commentaries. Professor Quanbeck, of Luther Theological Seminary

in St. Paul, digs deeper into Luther's early biblical interpretation, especially as this is revealed in the Reformer's lectures on the Psalms and on Romans. The relation of Luther's exegesis to his developing religious experience is explained, the resulting repudiation of medieval exegetical methods and the adoption of new methods are traced, and the emergence of a new understanding of the power and authority of the Word of God is described. Professor Rupp, of Manchester University in England, offers three skillful vignettes of Luther's left-wing opponents—Carlstadt, Müntzer, and Zwingli—and in the light of their "Puritanical Protestantism" Luther's own position is more clearly exposed.

Lectures delivered in the fall of 1957 have just been published, and these, too, will contribute to a better understanding in America of Luther and the Lutheran Reformation.

THEODORE G. TAPPERT

Pointing the Way. By Martin Buber. Translated and edited by Maurice S. Friedman. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957. 239 pages. $4.50.

Martin Buber needs no introduction to most of us. His many works (eighteen books), his lecture tour in this country, his role as spokesman for the entire Jewish community of Europe, especially during the Hitler regime, have made him famous the world over. He is undoubtedly one of the world's outstanding religious and philosophical thinkers. He holds the Goethe prize in literature.

Here in *Pointing the Way* we have a rich assortment of essays, culled from addresses and studies covering a period of fifty years. All of them breathe a warm sense of intimacy, leading the reader to feel he is sitting in the presence of a truly great soul. Though one will feel lost again and again in the dizzy flights of mysticism to which he soars, one will at the same time recognize a sure touch of realism whenever he deals with the issues of the day. In the earlier essays one senses an almost otherworldly mysticism that points to a way of escape. In the later ones the author seems more concerned with the here and now (the I-Thou relationship) which might well be characterized as mystical humanism. Of the former, "The Teaching of the Tao" is a good example. Of the latter, "Hope for This Hour," given as the last lecture in the United States, is representative.

Though many of the essays are too abstruse for the average reader, intended no doubt for professional philosophers (e.g., "Bergson's Concept of Intuition"), others again are meant for public consumption, like the one entitled "Gandhi, Politics, and Us." Incidentally, this last was a kind of open letter in answer to Gandhi's criticism of the Jews for not practicing non-violence under Hitler and for their desire to return to Palestine. In this essay an authentic voice of Judaism at its best is heard.

The wide range of Buber's interests and the intensity of feeling which he pours into his writing compel the reader to take up the volume again and again and to mull and ponder as he reads. However much one may want to question the views here expressed, one instinctively feels compelled to silence as one feels drawn to this great soul.

Thank you, Martin Buber, for letting us in on so rich a repast of spiritual wisdom!

STANLEY L. OLSEN

Basic Christian Beliefs. By W. Burnet Easton, Jr. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957. 187 pages. $3.75.

The author was educated at Yale and Union Theological Seminary. At first he was a Congregational minister, but later he transferred to the Presbyterian Church. Since 1953 he has been dean of Religious Life and assistant professor of Religion and Biblical Literature at Park College, Parkville, Missouri.

Under the chapter, "The Authority of the Bible," the author attempts to solve some of modern man's difficulties with miracles. He gives as rule number 1: "To read the Bible seriously does not mean to read it literally" (page 39). The author justifies this principle by stating that the biblical writers were "artists," i.e. oriental story tellers, with whom the main point was of far more importance than mere details. John's version of the conversion of water into wine has the point that Christ is "the new wine" and

that once a man has accepted or "tasted" Christ, everything he knew before is "flat" by comparison. Since the Bible is to be read thus, the least important question about any given story is, "How could this have happened?"

Good things are said about the centrality of Jesus as Messiah. While the author exalts the importance of the resurrection of Christ and of our own resurrection, this reviewer was not always sure that the author actually was talking about a resurrection.

Easton shows convincingly the need for Christ's atonement and summarizes five theories about it, giving approval to that called "Christus Victor" by Aulen.

The author has addressed himself to people of college background, well versed in their separate fields of knowledge, but who never had more than a kindergarten level of education in Christianity. Such people might then have been confronted with books which appeal to their pride of human intelligence, damaging their pre-school level of knowledge in religion. The author attempts to rebuild what has been thus torn down.

This reviewer feels that the author (perhaps in the name of an open-minded approach) has sometimes conceded too much for the sake of his argument.

A. C. Rueter

The Advancement of Theological Education. By H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James F. Gustafson. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957. 239 pages. $4.00.

This is the third and concluding volume in a series of incisive studies of theological education in the United States and Canada.

Nine chapters and an appendix, plus a three-page index, make up the book. Prof. Niebuhr himself wrote Chapter I, "Some Recent Trends in Theological Education," a painstaking statistical survey of seminary enrollments and faculties, coupled with well-grounded criticisms and comments; also Chapter II, a similar study of operating costs, income, outlay per student, and faculty salaries, and Chapter III on "Problems of Government" in the schools.

Prof. Williams, who like his confreres visited many of the seminaries and their faculties, presents his findings in three chapters on "The Theological Faculties," "The Course of Study," and "Theological Teaching." Chapter VII and IX were done by the assistant director, Mr. Gustafson.

The total study was under the constant supervision of the director, who coordinated the work of the staff and presided at the frequent planning and inquiry meetings of the whole group. This pattern of work guarded against the danger of a fragmentary approach to the several areas of the study and produced a document that bears the marks of unity and integrity. The language is of a liveliness and color hardly to be expected in a document of this character; there is not a hint of dullness here.

The Lutheran educator, reading and reflecting on the chapters one by one, will inevitably ask himself, "How does this agree with the patterns and experience and statistical records of our communion's theological schools?"

For his own satisfaction, this reviewer made several sampling comparisons between the statistical data reported in this book and collateral data for ten United Lutheran Church seminaries as reported informally and unofficially by Dr. Gould Wickey.

Concerning the academic preparation of seminary faculties, the report shows that of the total body of theological teachers serving Protestantism's seminaries twenty years ago or so, 30 per cent held the earned doctorate (Ph.D., Th.D., or S.T.D.), but in 1954-55, 65 per cent. The comparative Lutheran percentages reported by Dr. Wickey were 50 per cent twenty years ago, and 70 per cent in '54-55. So whatever percentage "advantage" the Lutherans had is fast disappearing. What is the significance of this change of ratio? And how important is the Ph.D. for the theological teacher? (One recalls the sardonic remark of the critic that "the professor was a Ph.D., but a first-rate teacher none the less.") But if the degree is important and we Lutherans are here losing our erstwhile lead, shall we not let the book's obvious if unstated warning to us sink in? And take urgent steps toward the grooming and training of ever more academically top-notch teachers—who have their

earned doctorate — for our theological schools? And through special provision (sabbatical study years, summer study inducements, fellowships, etc.) help these seminary teachers of ours who now lack the degree to achieve it? And those who now have it, to adorn it further and steadily increase both their specialized knowledge and their pedagogical competence through directed and systematic study above and beyond the day-by-day digging that every honest teacher must do, the year 'round, in his field?

In the earlier chapters, as has been pointed out, the authors have subjected the "body of theological education" to a searching "physical examination." Its organic structure, its functional processes, its ailments and weaknesses have been identified. Suitable diagnostic procedures have been followed through, and the case history is complete.

Now come therapeutic measures. They are the burden of the book's concluding chapter, "The Line of Advance." Remedial prescriptions are suggested, without apology. The director speaks out boldly: ". . . the key problem in theological education in the Protestantism of the United States and Canada is that of providing and maintaining the most able corps of teaching theologians and theological teachers possible."

That of course is not the only problem. Indeed, the author hastens to name three elements as necessary in an educational process—teaching corps, students, equipment. Much needs to be done with and in each of the three categories.

The physical equipment must be improved. Some schools are still woefully lacking in adequate library equipment and teaching facilities. Many schools lack a worthy chapel. Happily, the schools are striding ahead rapidly in this area of concern. "On the whole [physical need] is receiving adequate attention today; in some instances too much."

The student rightly is still more the focus of attention. Better recruitment, more penetrating testing procedures, more careful selection, evidence of adequate native gifts (one would add, and of the integrity of the man's vocation), improvement of the curriculum—nearly every seminary confronts a formidable and urgent responsibility.

But the key problem is the problem of ever better teaching, with the student a constantly active participant in the teaching process. Says Dr. Niebuhr (italics are his): *The greatest defect in theological education today is that it is too much an affair of piecemeal transmission of knowledge and skills, and that, in consequence, it offers too little challenge to the student to develop his own resources and to become an independent, lifelong inquirer, growing constantly while he is engaged in the work of the ministry.*

There is a way to better teaching in any school. It is (a) to enlist more high grade teachers and (b) to help the teachers now on the staff to make their good teaching better, month by month and year by year.

Dr. Niebuhr's final word has to do with the support of the seminaries by the churches, and this "is of course not primarily an economic matter." Nor is it just sending more students to the schools, important as this must always be.

Here is what he counts needful—and this is his concluding therapeutic suggestion—"Our next step in the advancement of theological education must be the better instruction of the churches in the meanings and problems of that enterprise."

We Lutherans will do well to take accelerating action here, without a moment's delay. All of us—our pastors, our lay people, our faculties, our students, our boards of directors—still have much to learn about what is most needful in theological education in order that there may issue from our seminaries men molded not by human power but by the Spirit himself, graduates to each of whom, without exception and with honest assurance, one might say what Paul said to Timothy long ago, ". . . you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have followed."

CHARLES B. FOELSCH

The Communication of the Christian Faith. By Hendrik Kraemer. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956. 128 pages. $2.50.

Dr. Kraemer is known to all as one of the creative figures in the ecumenical move-

ment. Experienced as a missionary, a Bible translator, a theological professor, and director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, he is exceptionally well-qualified to write about the problem of communicating the Gospel to the secularized world and the secularized church of our day.

It is his basic conviction that everywhere in the world today the church is characterized by a newly awakened apostolic consciousness. Although it is an established institution, the church is also a pilgrim body, venturing forth in faith, like Abraham, toward an unknown country. This self-conception makes evangelization the preoccupation of the church. The evangelistic task forces the church to ask the most serious questions about communication.

Since Kraemer regards the Gospel as unique, he opens his study with a chapter on "Communication in Biblical Perspective." Communication is the fundamental human fact, and understanding of it leads one into the broadest consideration of human life in all of its practical and theoretical activities. This aspect of communication Kraemer calls "communication between." But there is another aspect which he calls "communication of." Since the church is charged with the proclamation of the Gospel, it is concerned not only with entering into the human multilogue, but also with bearing witness to something new and indispensable—God's acts in Christ. In order to make contact with the strange modern world, the church is concerned about both aspects of communication. It is interested in bridge-building, but it insists that "communication of" the Christian message, if it is successful, engenders a new creature in Christ and thus develops the right "communication between," the right intersubjectivity. Sin distorts communication between men and between man and God. Only through a re-creation of the relation with God can there be a re-creation of true communication between men. The church is called to be the place where this happens, for it announces and exhibits the love of God which in turn invites man's loving response, and love is that state of disposability in which true communication comes to fruition.

The second chapter treats the historical aspects of communication. In the strategies devised during the first three centuries, one sees clearly the nature of "the perennial, insoluble tension in which the church has to live." The Gospel is "incommunicable, it cannot find an adequate translation in any human mode of speech and thought, and yet it touches the deepest aspirations and needs of man." The church is history-transcending, yet must take the form of a body in this historical world. Thus "communication of" must take the form of adaptation and assimilation. But this situation creates a double danger for the church—it may give in to the culture of the time, or it may withdraw to keep itself pure. As he reviews several attempts at communication, Kraemer argues that the weight fell on too much adaptation. In the time of Constantine the faith became "the ideology of an empire in transition" and the tension was lost. Moreover, the self-consciousness of Christianity became preeminently doctrinal. This development had disastrous consequences for both aspects of communication. There was no communication between the church and Islam, nor between the church and the heretics. The mission to China and India manifested an ability to accommodate, but this was not so much that the message might be effectively proclaimed as that the church might be transplanted. The European church in the nineteenth century allowed its communication to be fashioned by the leading secular ideas of the day, with the result that the church became more and more irrelevant.

Kraemer holds that there is a religious reason for the failure of most communication but that certain secondary reasons of great importance must be acknowledged. In the third chapter he therefore analyzes the "Psychological, Sociological, and Cultural Factors" which hinder communication. This chapter is notable for its positive estimate of the contributions of the social sciences to our understanding of communication and for its illuminating essay on the nature and function of language, considered as a theological and philosophical problem. He argues, however, that there are other forms of communication in addition to language. Because our culture is overwhelmingly verbal, rational, and technical, we have idolized

preaching at the expense of worship. The time is now ripe for the church to recover the significance of symbolism.

In the fourth chapter the author discusses "The Breakdown of Communication." This is an essay on the disintegration of modern culture. Secularization is the chief cause of the breakdown of Christian communication. But Kraemer is not one-sidedly negative about secularization. He points out that it is inside the church as well as in the world, and that it should be seen as God's rebuke to the church. It has a purifying function and calls the church to a radical realism about its conformity to the world. The church should take its predicament as a call to review its authentic nature. A radical renewal of the church is more urgent than an increase in membership. Kraemer rejects Bultmann's attempt to make Christianity relevant, as well as Fundamentalism's rationalistic rear-guard action. One of the most stimulating sections of the book is his description of the manner in which biblical criticism has been a blessing in disguise.

In his final chapter Kraemer discusses the possibilities of restoring communication. He finds the older methods of evangelism to be ineffective. What is really necessary is the devising of means whereby the church can break through its bourgeois class nature into the life of "post-Christian" mankind. Here he agrees with Bonhoeffer's suggestions. The language of the church will be a real communication only if it relies on the power of the Holy Spirit, abandons carnal securities, and goes forth into an unknown destiny. It must devise a more relevant apologetics, recover and re-state the great biblical themes, identify itself with religionless man through service, develop an imaginative lay-strategy, and seek for a new synthesis of Christian liberty and asceticism.

This is a profound and thought-provoking study. Kraemer's proposals are radical and productive of healthy self-criticism. The need of being brief has forced him to raise many tantalizing points without going into them fully, but the reader must certainly confront in a new way the complex aspects of communicating the Christian faith.

HAROLD H. DITMANSON

Protocol of the Lutheran Church in New York City, 1702-1750. Translated by Simon Hart and Harry J. Kreider. New York: United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, 231 Madison Avenue, 1958. 523 pages. $5.00.

A notable contribution to our understanding of colonial American Lutheranism is made by this English translation of the records of the Dutch Lutheran congregation in New York City during the first half of the eighteenth century. Reproduced from typescript by offset process and illustrated by several samples of the original, the "protocol" is a sort of chronicle which includes church council minutes and extensive correspondence. Interest in it is more than local, for the New York congregation was the center of Lutheran activity which extended northward to Albany and the Mohawk Valley and southward to the Raritan River in New Jersey. Moreover, the correspondence throws light on relations with fellow-Lutherans in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Europe.

The recorders were the pastors in New York at the time—Rudman, Falkner, Berkenmeyer, and Knoll. Among these the character of Berkenmeyer emerges with the greatest clarity. A man of learning and force, he was inclined to be narrow and uncharitable, especially in his relations with those who were "infested with the plague of Pietism" and who engaged in "pietistic loose talk about love." The ingratitude, attacks, and slanders which Berkenmeyer had to suffer undoubtedly contributed to his rigidity, and one cannot but wonder whether his cordial relations with the Swedish clergy on the Delaware were not a product of geographical distance rather than of kindred spirit.

The records provide a fresh insight into the dependence of colonial Lutherans on European charity (the sporadic and hesitant Lutheran World Action of the time), the painful struggles to build churches, the problems caused by interlopers or "vagabond preachers," the tendency among social climbers to leave their native church and join other churches, and the bitter feelings engendered by language differences (the twist in this case being that the Dutch-speaking

minority expected the gradually developing German-speaking majority to learn Dutch).

The diligent translators are the archivist of the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands and the historian of the Synod of New York and New England, the latter body having financed the preparation and publication. Anybody who uses the volume will have reason to be grateful to those who made its production possible.

THEODORE G. TAPPERT

Design for Preaching. By H. Grady Davis. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958. 307 pages. $4.75.

I have known Grady Davis for a long time. He and I and other members of the Chicago Seminary faculty of a little more than a decade ago worked together at teaching homiletics there. I was not alone in my questioning wonder as to whether one could really teach a student how to preach. I feared that by and large a man emerged from his homiletics courses about the same preacher he was when he registered for them . . . a little more poise . . . a little more polish . . . even a little more point, but hardly more. Native endowment was my idea of what mattered. I had no real confidence in anyone's ability to teach the art of preaching. A real preacher, I said, like a real painter, is born, not made.

Grady Davis did not quite agree, even then. And now his new book has pretty much changed my mind, I confess it willingly.

There have been a great many books written on preaching, some of them useful, a few illuminating, but none really presenting a method that had substance and promised fruitful results. *Design for Preaching* gets at the whole business in quite a new way.

The very first pages of this new book get at the heart of the matter. "Life appears," says the author, "in the union of substance and form. These are the elementals. To be without form is the void of matter and it is the void of thought." Thereupon this teacher, who is himself not only a preacher of charm and power but a poet too, with a deft, sharp brush outlines a plan of sermon construction that deals forthrightly with technical homiletical matters and shows how form and substance may be united dynamically.

Let none think that here is a new magic formula that will easily and smoothly transform every would-be preacher into a Philipps Brooks! Most students want an easy way of learning to preach. They do not want to be bothered about the discipline of form, or any other discipline. They want to get right at it and explain the Gospel to people. But as Dr. Davis says, "A sermon should be like a tree . . . a living organism . . . deep roots . . . showing its own unfolding parts . . . bearing flowers and fruit at the same time like the orange . . . growing in a warm climate . . .

"In loam enriched by death,
In love like the all seeing and all cherishing sun,
In trust like the sheltering night,
In pity like the rain."

Form, however, is not enough. What is the central thought in the sermon, the central idea? What am I aiming at? Much preaching fails because it appears to have no goal.

The basic idea? What is this Scripture really saying? What does it mean? What must I do about it? If one honestly studies a passage of Scripture, the answers to these questions will surely emerge. So the hearer in the pew should also find the answer to these questions when his pastor preaches.

Dr. Davis is not content to set down a technique. He illustrates his plan for "growing" sermons with examples drawn from the homiletical lore of the ages. The greatest preachers of the Christian centuries are made to bear testimony to the possibility of building stalwart sermons.

The book's illustrative sermons are analyzed step by step. The homiletical process comes to light. The budding preacher comes to grips with a technique. He learns that preaching is not limited to the realm of the fine arts, where only the native genius may make his abode; it is also a discipline that can be learned.

CHARLES B. FOELSCH